Le DÉLIT FRANÇAIS de McGill

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On s'appelait le Daily français depuis 1977 !

La longue Marche

Jérôme Lussier

Après beaucoup de complications bureaucratiques, le journal francophone de McGill se donne une nouvelle image

Un étrange sourire de satisfaction se lisait sur plusieurs visages au terme de la dernière réunion conjointe du McGill Daily et du Daily français. Attendue avec impatience, négociée à tous les niveaux de l'organisation du Daily, cette rencontre cruciale du 17 février devait trancher deux questions importantes : le changement de nom du Daily français, et la création de deux nouveaux postes pour ce même journal, un de metteur en page et l'autre de préposé à l'Internet. Le vote favorable, et unanime, est venu apaiser les craintes de ceux qui appréhendaient le pire, et en a surpris plus d'un.

C'est la dictature du code, et on appelle ça la démocratie.

Pourtant, le nom proposé (merci à Francis Larocque) nous paraissait tout à fait approprié : par le lien phonétique qui le rattache à l'ancien, et par son sens, trop peu polémique pour susciter une véritable opposition, mais assez mordant pour rendre justice à nos ambitions. Le fait francophone à McGill demeure marginal, et donne encore parfois lieu à quelques frictions. L'histoire de ce changement de nom en fut un bon exemple, d'où la nervosité entourant ce vote, incertain jusqu'à la toute fin, et la surprise d'une victoire somme toute facile.

L'étonnement est compréhensible quand on connaît l'inertie incroyable dans laquelle pâtissent trop souvent les organisations étudiantes « politisées », dont le Daily est l'archétype (suivi de près par la SSMU, apparemment). Par respect pour la « démocratie », on instaure mille mesures bureaucratiques qui n'ont souvent pour effet que d'empêcher ou de ralentir tout changement, si mineur soit-il. Les discussions de procédures prennent ainsi plus de place que les débats de fond, qui deviennent presque superflus. C'est la dictature du code, et on appelle ça la démocratie.

C'est en bonne partie pour cette raison que les membres du Daily français (et ses lecteurs nous l'espérons) ont dû attendre si longtemps avant de voir leur journal changer de nom. Depuis plus d'un an l'idée circulait - les élections d'hiver en avaient même abondamment fait état - mais ce n'est qu'aujourd'hui que le changement prend acte, sur papier. Et sur papier seulement parce que, constitution oblige, le changement de nom « officiel » et « juridique » ne sera effectif qu'après ratification du vote du 17 février par le *Board of Directors* du Daily.

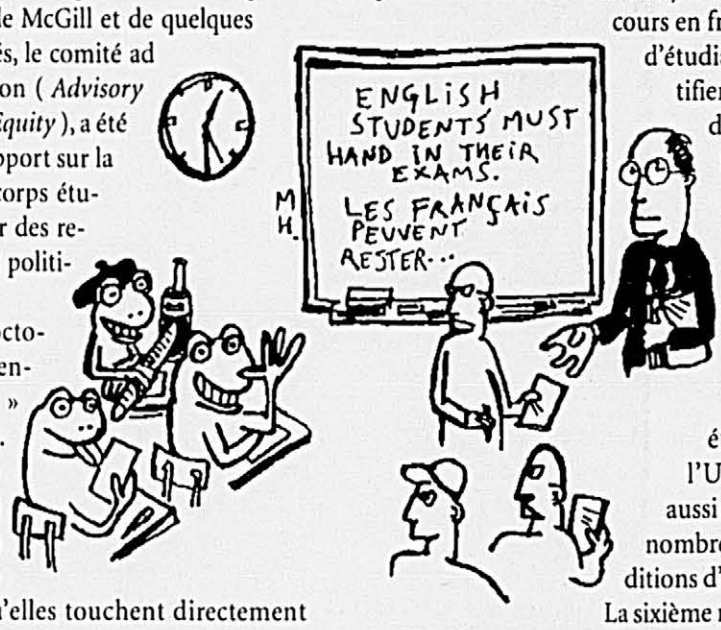
Sans entrer dans les détails, tous plus fastidieux les uns que les autres, mentionnons seulement que cette ratification sacrée mettra un terme à bien des complications, et permettra peut-être aux rédacteurs et journalistes de passer plus de temps à améliorer le contenu du journal qu'à discuter de mièvreries constitutionnelles.

Fin heureuse donc, pour une histoire pas tout à fait terminée. Techniquement, le changement d'aujourd'hui est illégal, n'ayant pas encore été soumis au conseil privé du Daily pour approbation et bénédiction finale. Mais nous sommes las d'attendre les permissions, surtout quand on sait que le meilleur moyen de les obtenir est encore de les contourner. Le progressisme a droit à une certaine effronterie. Et tant pis pour la bureaucratie.

Un statut spécial pour les francophones?

Julien Laplante

L'*Academic Policy and Planning Community* (APPC) est un organisme administratif de l'Université McGill qui s'occupe des politiques et de la planification pour l'établissement d'enseignement. Cet organisme est composé de plusieurs administrateurs de McGill et de quelques étudiants. Un de ses comités, le comité ad hoc sur l'équité en éducation (*Advisory Committee on Educational Equity*), a été formé pour produire un rapport sur la composition ethnique du corps étudiant de McGill et proposer des recommandations quant aux politiques favorisant l'équité.



Le rapport, déposé en octobre 1997, s'intitule « Apprendre par la diversité » (*Learning from Diversity*). Certaines de ses recommandations seront sans aucun doute d'un très grand intérêt pour les lecteurs de ce journal puisqu'elles touchent directement les francophones. Advenant qu'elles soient adoptées, ces recommandations auraient effectivement un effet bien concret sur la vie scolaire des étudiants francophones de McGill.

À cet égard, c'est sans aucun doute la douzième recommandation qui est la plus marquante. On y retrouve effectivement plusieurs éléments très importants, tels que la proposition d'allouer du temps supplémentaire pour les examens lorsque rédigés par un francophone, la traduction des questions d'examens en français et la création de nouveaux cours en français lorsque le nombre d'étudiants francophones le justifierait. On y propose aussi de développer les critères des facultés pour assurer une notation plus adéquate des travaux présentés en français.

Ces propositions ont non seulement pour but de faciliter l'adaptation et l'apprentissage des étudiants francophones à l'Université McGill, mais aussi d'en attirer un plus grand nombre en leur offrant des conditions d'études plus intéressantes. La sixième recommandation propose d'ailleurs explicitement que le bureau du recrutement porte une attention particulière à l'admission d'étudiants francophones . Le but ultime de cette recommandation est de diversifier la composition ethnique, culturelle et sociale de l'Université McGill parce que, nous dit le rapport, « l'apprentissage dans le monde universitaire dépend grandement des personnes composant le corps étudiant et des relations qui y sont forgées. »

De telles recommandations ne sont pas sans créer certaines divergences d'opinions au sein de l'APPC. Effectivement, lors de la réunion du 26 février dernier, il était possible de se rendre compte rapidement des réticences de certains membres de l'organisme par rapport à la douzième recommandation. Andrew Kovacs, de l'Association étudiante de l'Université McGill, dans

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ACTUALITÉ

La Mobilisation tranquille

Maude Laparé

La plupart du temps, quand les étudiants veulent se faire entendre, ils organisent des manifestations où ils clament haut et fort le droit à l'éducation, condamnent la hausse des frais de scolarité et protestent contre la gravité de l'endettement étudiant. Or, le 10 février dernier, un regroupement de la plupart des organismes étudiants a tenu une conférence de presse pour dénoncer la situation dramatique des jeunes et forcer le gouvernement à agir dans ce dossier. Ils ont crié moins fort, ils n'ont pas assiégé de bureaux, mais se sont fait entendre et ont été pris, semble-t-il, au sérieux. C'est peut-être l'élément qui manquait dans les relations entre les jeunes et le gouvernement.

C'était la première fois qu'autant d'organismes étudiants œuvraient pour la même cause. En effet, outre l'incontournable Conseil permanent de la jeunesse (CPJ), les fédérations étudiantes universitaire et collégiale (la FEUQ et la FECQ) se trouvaient à la table des organisations de jeunes la Fédération des médecins résidents du Québec (FMRQ), le Comité national des jeunes (CSN), la Fédération de la relève agricole du Québec, la Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne (JOC), le Projet place aux jeunes et l'Association des services d'aide aux jeunes entrepreneurs du Québec (ASAJEQ). Tous les organismes avaient, pour l'occasion, laissé de côté leurs visions divergentes pour pousser conjointement un cri d'alarme. « Lorsque l'on dresse le portrait de la situation des jeunes au Québec, il apparaît plus qu'urgent que les jeunes s'unissent afin de dénoncer le manque de vision globale du gouvernement et surtout afin de proposer des solutions en matière d'emploi, d'éducation et d'insertion » précise Nikolas Ducharme, président de la FEUQ.

C'est en effet un constat inquiétant de la situation des jeunes qu'ont dressé les représentants des diverses organisations. Certaines des statistiques qu'ils ont présentées indiquent que le chômage chez les moins de trente ans est passé de 13,1% à 18,9% de 1989 à 1996. De plus, depuis les années 90, le pourcentage de jeunes sur le marché du travail a chuté de 12% et le taux de pauvreté des jeunes a dramatiquement augmenté au cours des vingt dernières années. D'ailleurs, on ne peut pas nier l'impact psychologique qu'ont de telles situations et la coalition des organismes-jeunesse ajoute que le Québec est une des régions du monde à avoir le plus haut taux de suicide chez les jeunes.

De tels chiffres ont donc amené les jeunes à dresser une liste de recommandations qu'ils ont rendue publique dans leur conférence de presse intitulée « Les jeunes veulent prendre leur place : il faut leur en donner les moyens. ! » Ce sont en effet des moyens que proposent les jeunes au gouvernement, on n'en est plus à l'étape des cris pour simplement éliminer les frais de scolarité ou obliger l'embauche des jeunes; les recommandations ont gagné en maturité et le gouvernement ne pourra faire autrement que de s'y attarder. Ces recommandations concernent surtout l'emploi, la pauvreté, la réussite scolaire et l'exode des jeunes vers la ville.

D'ailleurs, cette démarche, entreprise à la veille de l'annonce d'un plan d'action-jeunesse par le gouvernement du Québec, a déjà reçu une réponse du ministre André Boisclair, qui a invité les divers organismes à s'asseoir avec lui pour l'élaboration d'un plan qui devrait être divulgué dans les prochains mois. Il semble donc que la jeunesse, qui ne possède toujours qu'une voix consultative à Québec, a été entendue et serait en mesure de participer davantage aux décisions qui la concernent. Il reste à voir jusqu'à quel point les recommandations de la coalition seront reçues et traitées, mais une chose est sûre, neuf voix pour les jeunes sauront certainement mieux les défendre qu'une seule.

L'insatisfaction étudiante a souvent mené à des manifestations par le passé

Revendications pricipales présentées lors de la conférence de presse du 18 février:

Emploi :
-mettre en place une « table jeunesse » par région ou MRC
-renforcer le réseau des Carrefours jeunesse-emploi
-que le gouvernement légifère dans les plus brefs délais afin d'interdire les clauses dites « orphelins » ou toutes clauses discriminantes envers les jeunes dans les conventions collectives

Fonction publique:
-que le gouvernement du Québec, en concertation avec les organisations syndicales, instaure un programme de mise à la retraite progressive jumelée à des embauches correspondantes pour des jeunes via le compagnonage
-revoir la place du critère d'ancienneté en privilégiant avant tout la formation et les qualifications des candidats en préservant le critère d'ancienneté en tant que critère décisif entre deux candidats de formation et de qualifications égales

Pauvreté-marginalisation
-que le salaire minimum soit haussé pour permettre un revenu suffisant
-que les parcours d'insertion à l'emploi soient disponibles sur une base volontaire

Endettement:
-remettre sur pied un nouveau programme de remise de dette pour chacun des trois sycles d'études post-secondaires
-appliquer un crédit d'impôt remboursable sur les intérêts payés par l'ex-étudiant sur sa dette d'études
-réduire le plafond des prêts

Encadrement et réussite académique
-abolir la taxe à l'échec
-investir des ressources dans les services d'aide et d'encadrement

suite de la page 1: Les Francophones...

un mémoire présenté aux membres de l'APPC, a proposé un amendement à la recommandation. M. Kovacs a effectivement proposé d'allonger la durée des examens pour les étudiants non pas francophones, mais qui écrivent leur examen en français, prétextant que c'était avant tout le fait qu'il prend plus de temps pour exprimer ses idées en français qu'en anglais qui devait être pris en considération et non pas le fait d'être francophone ou non.

La fameuse recommandation fut par la suite soumise à des critiques encore plus véhémentes de la part des autres participants à la réunion. Un d'entre eux n'hésita pas à soulever la crainte de voir les étudiants francophones perçus comme des handicapés advenant la mise en application de ces propositions. D'autres critiques portaient sur la complexité technique de la prolongation du temps pour les examens écrits par les francophones et la traduction des examens en français. Finalement, on souleva aussi le fait qu'une grande partie des francophones étudiant à McGill le font pour devenir bilingues et qu'ainsi, certaines mesures pour développer les services scolaires en français n'étaient probablement pas appropriées.

Les nombreuses recommandations de ce rapport seront soumises à des discussions plus poussées quant à la possibilité de les adopter définitivement et aux amendements que l'on devrait y apporter. Les propositions ayant égard au français et aux francophones semblent être les plus sujettes à de tels amendements.

Éditorial

Pétage de bretelles et suçons à l'érable

Le budget du ministre des finances Paul Martin déposé mardi dernier a de quoi en décevoir plus d'un. Certes, c'est le premier budget équilibré d'Ottawa depuis 28 ans, soit depuis l'exercice de 1969-70, et cela ne compte pas pour des prunes. Les Libéraux, avec raison, sont très fiers de leur exploit d'avoir fait fondre le déficit fédéral de 42 milliards par année à un surplus de trois milliards en quatre ans seulement. Cela mérite tout de même un très sincère bravo.

Le problème c'est que le gouvernement fédéral semble vouloir garder jalousement sa nouvelle liberté d'action financière, et passer directement au-dessus des gouvernements provinciaux pour venir en aide lui-même aux Canadiens les plus nécessiteux, alors que c'est justement en réduisant de façon draconienne les transferts fédéraux aux provinces pour la santé, l'aide sociale et l'éducation post-secondaire que le fédéral a pu équilibrer son budget.

Cet état de fait est particulièrement bien illustré par la création de la Fondation canadienne des bourses du millénaire. Il s'agit là d'un programme visant à s'attaquer au problème criant de l'endettement étudiant en offrant à 100 000 d'entre eux des bourses d'études d'une valeur moyenne de 3 000 dollars par année, et ce à partir de l'an 2000. Il est indéniable que ce programme a du bon. Mais encore une fois, on se contente de soulager les symptômes au lieu de guérir le bobo.

Depuis le dégel des frais de scolarité en 1990, l'endettement étudiant a augmenté de plus de 30% au Québec pour se situer autour d'une moyenne de 12 000$,(tout de même bien au-dessous de la moyenne canadienne qui se situe autour de 20 000$). De façon générale, cet accroissement de l'endettement étudiant n'est imputable qu'à l'augmentation des frais de scolarité et à la restriction des programmes d'aide qui découlent directement des sévères restrictions des transferts fédéraux aux provinces justifiées par la lutte au déficit. Ayant atteint son objectif financier, le gouvernement libéral refuse d'augmenter ne serait-ce qu'un peu les transferts aux provinces, préférant distribuer des sucettes (à saveur d'érable bien sûr...) pour redorer son image après des années d'austérité.

Le gouvernement du Québec a déjà son propre programme de bourses depuis les années soixante. Voir ainsi le gouvernement fédéral lui couper l'herbe sous le pied et redistribuer les fonds qui lui reviennent de droit a de quoi alimenter l'éternelle querelle fédérale-provinciale. Tous s'entendent là-dessus. Le meilleur moyen dont le fédéral dispose pour aider les plus démunis du pays est bien certainement d'aider les programmes provinciaux qui étouffent sous les restrictions budgétaires que le gouvernement fédéral a lui-même imposé aux provinces depuis quatre ans.

Aux lieu de prendre les citoyens pour des imbéciles en se créant du capital politique et en leur leurs distribuant des nananes fédéraux, le gouvernement d'Ottawa aurait eu grand avantage à jouer la carte du parent généreux en haussant les transferts au niveau provincial ou au moins en baissant les impôts de façon vraiment significative (au lieu de cette baisse symbolique qui représente un maximum de 85$ par individu par année). Au lieu de cela, le fédéral risque d'envenimer sérieusement le débat de la souveraineté, car en venant jouer de la sorte dans les plates-bandes du gouvernement québécois dans un secteur aussi chatouilleux que l'éducation, Ottawa fournit tous les arguments dont rêvait le Parti Québécois pour sa réélection et son projet de souveraineté.

ÉTIENNE BIENVENU

Délit FRANÇAIS

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Message d'intérêt public

La Voie Libre, un groupe de GRIP-Concordia pour l'éducation en entretien de bicyclette organise un atelier gratuit mercredi le 4 mars à 18h, au 2131 McKay, métro Guy-Concordia. Amenez votre vieille réguine et nous serons là pour vous aider à la retaper avec les outils que nous aurons à votre disposition! Pour plus d'information, appelez au 848-7585.

Théâtre

Je vais Mourir devant Vous

ALAIN BENOÎT

Le théâtre Espace la Veillée présente ces jours-ci la pièce *Les Quatre Morts de Marie*, de l'auteure montréalaise Carole Fréchette. Son personnage de Marie meurt quatre fois, en traversant, sur scène, des périodes de la vie. On assiste à son évolution, de l'enfance à l'âge mûr. Tous se reconnaissent quelque part en elle. L'auteure jette un regard d'une remarquable profondeur sur la vie. Marie cherche inlassablement à comprendre la sienne, à lui donner un sens. Elle mène sa quête à toute allure, propulsée par son ambition, à la poursuite de ses rêves. Bientôt, elle se heurte à un obstacle insurmontable. C'est le choc cruel de la désillusion. Elle change alors de peau et prend un nouveau départ. On rencontre d'abord Marie quand elle est encore une enfant. Puis elle devient une activiste. Ensuite, elle tente de se caser, mais part finalement pour un grand voyage. Les différents tableaux de cette pièce finement travaillée se recoupent souvent. Ainsi, quand Marie tente d'ouvrir les yeux des gens face à la souffrance du monde, on croit revoir la détresse de son père, rencontré plus tôt. Tout jeunes, Marie et son copain Pierrot rêvent de voyager, mais plus tard, un certain Pierre-Jean raconte qu'au bout du monde, il a trouvé le même vide que chez lui.

Les comédiens interprétent tous plusieurs personnages. Ils se montrent très convaincants dans chacun de leurs rôles. Suzanne Lemoine reste Marie tout au long de la pièce, mais vieillit avec elle. Dans le premier tableau, elle semble tout à fait à l'aise en petite fille, puis réussit très bien à passer aux rôles de femme adulte. Deux autres comédiens, Sylvie Drapeau et Patrick Goyette, ont souvent joué à la télévision et au cinéma. Ils interprètent chacun deux personnages très différents, mais campent l'un aussi solidement que l'autre. Sylvie Drapeau joue d'abord Simone, la mère de Marie, toujours triste. On la retrouve plus tard dans la peau de la pimpante Sylvette, débordante d'énergie et extravertie. Patrick Goyette joue le rôle de Louis, qui brûle d'abord de faire bouger le monde, puis revient sous les traits d'un homme réservé, soucieux de ne pas attirer l'attention. Denis Roy commence par jouer le père de Marie, submergé par le désespoir, puis devient un travailleur discret et gêné. Éric Bernier, enfin, incarne un personnage qui évolue et ressemble un peu à Marie. Les cinq comédiens accomplissent l'exploit d'interpréter avec aplomb cette dizaine de rôles souvent diamétralement opposés.

La mise en scène paradoxale donne un aspect mystérieux au spectacle. On emploie ponctuellement quelques effets sonores et lumineux très élaborés et efficaces, tout en préservant le caractère minimaliste du spectacle. Entre les tableaux, les comédiens déplacent eux-mêmes les accessoires, pendant que de l'eau coule du plafond. Le décor sobre renforce le sentiment de vide, surtout à la fin de la pièce, quand l'eau recouvre la scène. Marie entreprend alors un voyage en mer et marche littéralement sur l'eau.

Minuscule théâtre de la rue Ontario, l'Espace la Veillée se spécialise dans la mise en scène de pièces inconnues du public. Certaines sont écrites par des auteurs comme Franz Kafka et Joyce Carol Oates, que les autres compagnies boudent. Ainsi, l'atmosphère est très différente de celle d'une visite dans un grand théâtre réputé. En attendant l'ouverture des portes, les spectateurs, bien que peu nombreux, s'entassent dans la salle d'entrée exigüe. La musique alternative qui sort des haut-parleurs leur confirme qu'ils ne se trouvent pas dans un théâtre ordinaire. La petite salle de spectacle donne un caractère intime à la représentation. Elle rapproche plus que jamais les comédiens des spectateurs. « Les Quatre morts de Marie » convient parfaitement au théâtre qui la présente.

L'auteure Carole Fréchette, n'aurait jamais cru que sa pièce, écrite en 1991, allait prendre tant de temps à se rendre jusqu'à nous. Dans une entrevue accordée récemment au journal *la Presse*, elle avoue sa perplexité devant l'attitude des théâtres montréalais. Pour des raisons obscures, ils ont refusé jusqu'à aujourd'hui de présenter sa pièce, qui a connu du succès succès à Toronto et en Europe.

Carole Fréchette a déjà plusieurs textes à son actif. Souhaitons que la scène montréalaise lui accorde plus de place.

« Les quatre morts de Marie » de Carole Fréchette
une mise en scène de Martin Faucher
Théâtre Espace la Veillée jusqu'au 22 mars.

Exposition

Que fleurisse la diversité

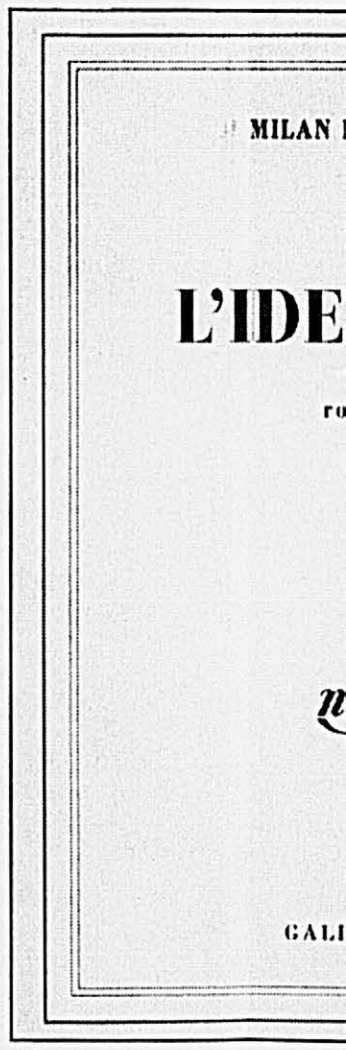
ZOÏLA-ÉLIZABETH GAULIN

La Maison de la Culture Plateau-Mont-Royal présente les œuvres de dix artistes-peintres canadiens d'origine asiatique. Empreinte d'originalité, cette exposition est révélatrice de la diversité culturelle de ces artistes qui ont grandi sous différents régimes politiques. Elle témoigne de leur quête commune pour se situer dans le courant dominant de l'art contemporain, tout en conservant leurs particularités culturelles. Établis à Montréal pour des raisons biens différentes, partagés entre les influences artistiques d'ici et d'ailleurs, ces artistes vivent une *Mutation Mutuelle.*

Chacune des œuvres nous transporte dans un univers différent, nous faisant passer de l'ombre à la lumière, de la modernité à la préhistoire, de l'immensité des montagnes tibétaines, paisibles et sereines, au cœur de l'activité florissante et frénétique qui envahit notre île chérie, lorsqu'arrive la saison estivale; de l'orient à l'occident, de l'abstrait au trop concret. Particulièrement intéressante, la muraille de l'artiste Kui Yao, « Neige », nous permet de jeter un regard nouveau sur nos durs hivers montréalais. Empreinte de poésie, cette œuvre abstraite est l'expression orientale d'un caprice ou d'une douce fantaisie de Dame nature. Puis, en un battement d'ailes, nous voilà éblouis par l'immuable clarté de l'œuvre typiquement orientale, autant par son sujet que par sa technique et ses teintes, du peintre Xiao Yang Yu.

Cette visite à la Maison de la Culture, cette *Mutation Mutuelle,* porte à la réflexion. À la contemplation des « Portraits, » personnages masqués, de l'artiste Andong Wang, a surgi en moi un cri de révolte : « Cesse de te cacher derrière ton masque, afin que de toi émerge quelque chose de nouveau, d'authentique. » Mais enfin, qui suis-je ? Qui sommes-nous ? Fruit d'une terre bien précise, enfant d'une culture qui se veut distincte, le vent t'emportera peut-être ailleurs, peut-être l'a-t-il déjà fait, et de cette mutation surgit inévitablement la question de l'identité. Comment rester fidèle à ses origines, tout en se laissant imprégner par la culture nouvelle dans laquelle nous évoluons à présent ? Où se termine l'enrichissement, où commence la trahison ? Il semble évident que ce questionnement fait partie du processus créatif de ces artistes, leurs œuvres en témoignent. En définitive, voilà ce qui fait la richesse de cette exposition : l'authenticité, la fraîcheur et la diversité autant culturelle qu'artistique de chacun de ces artistes-peintres.

Mutation Mutuelle, jusqu'au 22 mars
Maison de la Culture Plateau-Mont-Royal
465, avenue Mont-Royal Est.



Dans le cadre de l'exposition
jusqu'au 22 mars, l'Association
colloque intitulé « L'Art dans la
Fournel et Léo Rosshandler, tous
se tiendra dimanche le 8 mars 19
Plateau-Mont-Royal.

Nouveaux disques

AB...CD

JONATHAN ARÈS

James Iha
Let It Come Down
Virgin

On connait bien James Iha comme le second violon des Smashing Pumpkins (le meneur étant bien sûr Billy Corgan), chez qui sa créativité n'a jamais vraiment trouvé sa place. Sur *Let It Come Down*, on s'aperçoit assez rapidement que la musique de monsieur Iha n'a pas cette lourdeur de guitares qui est si caractéristique des Pumpkins. Les chansons sont plutôt à saveur pop innocente. Comme le dit James, « j'ai essayé de créer des pièces crédibles et aptes à n'être accompagnées que par ma voix et ma guitare. » C'est en écoutant la première chanson tirée de cet album, intitulée « Be Strong Now », qu'on s'aperçoit que la légèreté, dans tous ses sens, est de mise. Un seul bémol toutefois: cet album dégage une telle impression de rose *nanane* dans certaines chansons que ça en devient quétaine.

8/10

DJ Spooky That Subliminal Kid
Synthetic Fury Ep
Asphodel

À la première écoute de la chanson « Dumb Mutha Fucka », on a l'impression de rentrer dans un univers cyber-punk. Violons, « scratching », rythme jungle et distorsions se mêlent allègrement. Les mélodies post-modernes de cet artiste new-yorkais sont sombres, futuristes, surréalistes et chaotiques. L'ingéniosité de DJ Spooky, alias Paul Miller, se fait sentir d'un bout à l'autre de ce mini-album. Il évite le piège de la redondance qui est épidémique dans le monde techno. Des groupes comme Prodigy paraissent bien superficiels et inoffensifs comparativement à ce DJ Spooky. En bref, *Synthetic Fury* est un mini-album très bien réussi et surtout très intelligent, mais destiné, au mieux, à un succès underground. Dommage.

9/10

Artistes Variés
Half-Baked
MCA

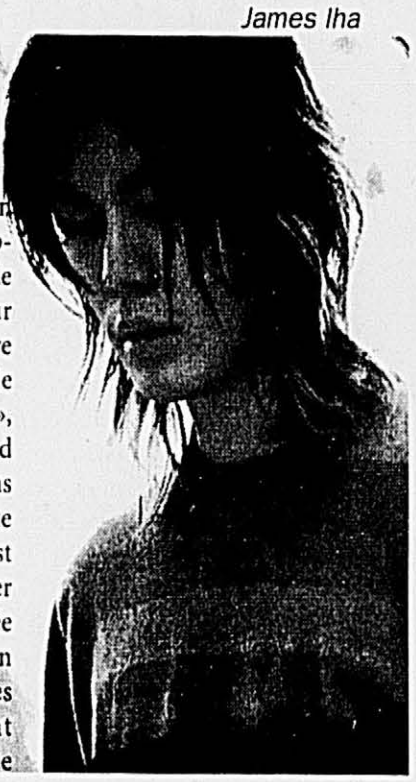
Dans le monde musical, on connait la recette pour se faire de l'argent : on rassemble à l'aveuglette quelques artistes catégorisés alternatifs en prenant soin d'en prendre quelques-uns qui sont dans le vent, on endisque et hop voilà des dollars vite faits. *Half-Baked* est un hybride entre l'alternatif et le trip-hop. Malgré la collaboration de Tricky, gourou du trip-hop, sur plusieurs pièces, cinq pour être plus précis, l'album sent le réchauffé. « Along Comes Mary », interprétée par Bloodhound Gang, est une des seules chansons solides, même si elle n'apporte rien de nouveau. Cet album est destiné à ceux qui veulent s'initier au monde de l'alternatif, denrée rare en ces jours. Peut-être qu'un jour, les dirigeants des grandes compagnies de disques vont comprendre que cette recette n'intéresse plus grand-monde...

5/10

e...

Ani DiFranco - Little Plastic Castle (Righteous Babe) Ani démontre encore une fois que le folk peut être intéressant. 8/10

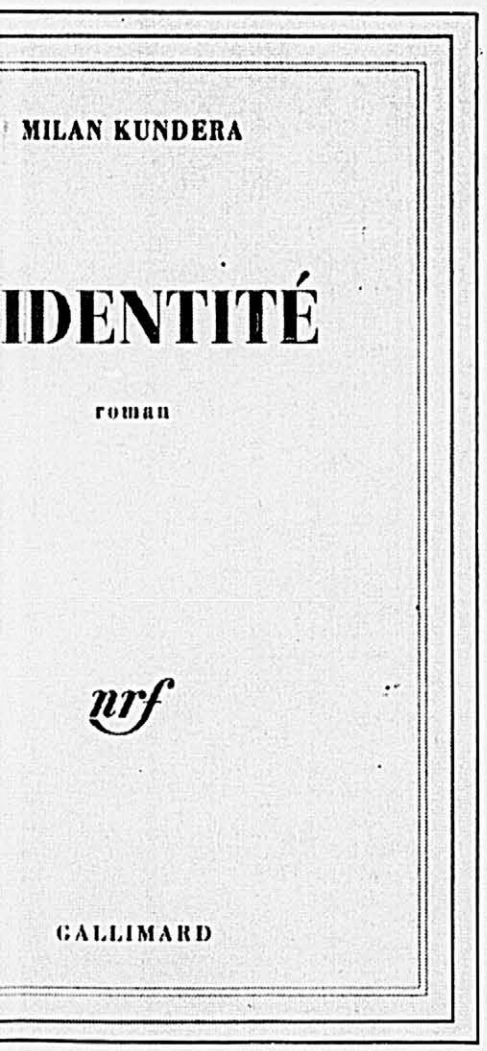
James Iha



Artistes Variés - Bond Beat & Bass (Hypnotic) Même si cet album profite du succès commercial dont jouit James Bond, cette compilation reste fraîche et divertissante. 7/10

L'identité

Le nouveau roman de Milan Kundera



DAVID GROISON

« L'Identité » de Milan Kundera ressemble trait pour trait à une des nouvelles de ses « Risibles Amours » : « Le Jeu de l'auto-stop ».

Dans cette nouvelle, un homme et une femme partent en vacances. Ils s'arrêtent prendre de l'essence. La femme va aux toilettes et au lieu de rentrer directement dans la voiture, elle tend le pouce et son compagnon fait semblant de la prendre en stop. Ils créent ainsi des personnages, l'auto-stoppeuse légère et le conducteur séducteur. Ils s'amusent à les incarner, à voir l'autre sous un autre jour. Et puis ils veulent cesser le jeu, mais pas en même temps. Alors, en faisant l'amour, ils ont l'impression de se tromper. Ils ont l'impression de coucher avec un autre, et que l'autre couche avec quelqu'un qui n'est pas eux. A la fin, l'héroïne a beau répéter « je suis moi, je suis moi, je suis moi », son identité reste cachée par l'image d'elle que son amant lui a imposée.

C'est sur cette fugitive identité que revient ici Milan Kundera. Sur son identité propre et sur celle de l'être aimé. Sur cette identité qui nous définit et que nous pouvons pourtant si facilement perdre ou changer.

« L'Identité » ressemble au « Jeu de l'auto-stop » en cela qu'il a beau être un roman, il ressemble à une nouvelle, à peine plus dense, qui se dévore en l'espace d'une soirée. Il y a aussi un couple, un jeu auquel il participe plus ou moins consciemment. Il y a un décalage, une incompréhension mutuelle. Il y a deux monologues intérieurs, celui de l'homme et de la femme, qui se juxtaposent sans jamais se rejoindre. Il y a aussi les mêmes thèmes, repris sans grande nouveauté. « L'Identité » est donc une sorte de « remake »

En effet, le lecteur assidu ne peut s'empêcher d'avoir un sentiment de « déjà lu ». Cette réflexion sur le langage du corps, appliquée ici à la rougeur qui trahit les pensées de l'héroïne, était déjà présente dans « L'Immortalité » (mais quelle réflexion, quelle pensée n'était pas déjà présente dans « L'Immortalité », le roman sans doute le plus complet de l'humanité ?). Ces mots révélant que « est secret ce qui est le plus commun, le plus banal, le plus répétitif et propre à tous : le corps et ses besoins, ses maladies, ses manies, la constipation, par exemple, ou les règles. », ces mots expliquant que ce n'est donc pas par ces secrets que se définit quelqu'un, Kundera ne les a-t-il pas déjà dits, et de la même façon ? Cette idée qu'au-delà de chaque visage, on en découvre sans cesse un autre, que les visages ne sont que des façades (« Confondre l'apparence physique de l'aimée avec celle d'une autre. Combien de fois il a déjà vécu cela ! ») constituait déjà une partie entière de cette même « Immortalité ».

« L'Identité » manque donc de sang neuf, un comble pour Milan Kundera qui a véritablement inventé un nouveau style, une nouvelle structure narrative, polyphonique, où les voix se font écho, où celle de l'auteur n'est qu'une vision parmi d'autres (historiques, érotiques, scatologiques...). Il a su imposer au roman la variation sur un même thème, un concept musical qu'il a, avec merveille, appliqué aux mots.

« L'Identité » comme « La Lenteur » s'éloigne de cette vision du roman. Le récit est plus bref, plus court. Il est reserré. L'enjeu est ici de définir, hier la lenteur, aujourd'hui l'identité. L'ambition est plus modeste mais n'est pas pour autant dénuée d'intérêt.

Pour celui ou celle qui n'aurait pas lu les sept romans, les deux essais, les deux pièces de théâtre et le recueil de nouvelles de Milan Kundera, « L'Identité » reste un beau roman, drôle et intelligent. Pour les autres... Les autres, de toute façon, l'ont déjà lu.

« L'Identité »
De Milan Kundera
Editions Gallimard.

l'exposition Mutation Mutuelle qui se poursuit
Association Artistique Québec-Asie organise un
L'Art dans la vie », auquel seront invités Louise
handler, tous deux critiques d'art. Cette rencontre
e le 8 mars 1998, à 14h, à la Maison de la Culture
al.

ACTUALITÉ

Mystère autour de l'expansion de l'univers

De récents travaux d'une équipe de chercheurs australiens démontrent que contrairement à ce que l'on pensait, l'expansion de l'univers ne ralentit pas, mais accélère. Ces travaux soulèvent de nombreuses interrogations dans les milieux scientifiques et les conséquences de cette découverte pourraient être énormes.

NICOLAS DELERUE

La théorie du Big Bang est reconnue par quasiment tous les astrophysiciens comme étant celle qui explique la formation de notre univers. Ses succès sont tels que certains théologiens, après l'avoir étudiée en profondeur, comme Gérard L. Schroeder dans son livre *The Science of God*, ont déclaré que cette théorie et la Genèse telle que décrite dans l'Ancien Testament n'étaient pas incompatibles.

L'astrophysicien Hubble avait prédit que si la théorie du Big Bang était correcte, les galaxies devraient s'éloigner les unes des autres à une vitesse proportionnelle à leur distance. Ce résultat a depuis été vérifié et il ne fait maintenant plus de doute que l'univers est en expansion. Mais c'est après que tout se complique. En effet, les débris d'une explosion ne sont pas projetés à l'infini, mais ils finissent toujours par s'arrêter. On pensait qu'il en était de même pour les galaxies qui sont les « débris » du Big Bang. Pourtant, les résultats d'une équipe australienne semble prouver le contraire. Effectivement, les résultat de la « High-z Supernova Search Team » dirigée par Brian Schmidt montrent, avec une certitude comprise entre 98,7 et 99,9% que l'expansion de l'univers accélère.

Un résultat totalement inattendu

Ce résultat va à l'encontre de ce à quoi l'on s'attendait, c'est-à-dire qu'il contredit les théories actuelles expliquant l'évolution de l'univers. « Ma propre réaction est à mi-chemin entre la fascination et l'horreur » a déclaré Brian Schmidt. « Fascination parce que je ne m'attendais pas à ce résultat, et horreur car je savais qu'[il] ne serait probablement pas cru par la majorité des astrophysiciens qui, comme moi, sont très méfiants vis à vis des choses inattendues ».

Cette consternation s'explique par le fait que l'on ne connait jusqu'à présent qu'une seule force qui a des effets à longue distance, la gravitation. Cette force agit comme un ressort et elle tend donc à freiner l'univers dans son expansion.

Une explication qui soulève beaucoup d'interrogations

« [Ce résultat] a l'air stupide » confie Robert Kirshner, l'un des membres de l'équipe internationale à l'origine de ce résultat, « mais [l'accélération de l'expansion de l'univers] est la plus simple explication pour les données que nous avons ».

Mais cette explication soulève probablement plus de problèmes qu'elle n'en résout. Si ce résultat venait à être confirmé (et il semble déjà corroboré avec les résultats obtenus indépendamment par une équipe américaine), les théoriciens devront mettre au point des modèles rendant compte de cette accélération. L'existence d'une nouvelle force dont l'effet serait contraire à celui de la gravitation a, bien-sûr, été évoqué (Eötvös, il y a près d'un siècle avait déjà pensé à un tel effet, mais ses travaux n'ont jamais été confirmés). D'autres explications pourraient venir de la nature très particulière du vide qui, selon les physiciens des particules, n'est pas vide ! Les partisans de l'hypothèse selon laquelle la matière se crée en permanence partout dans l'univers vont aussi pouvoir adapter leurs théories pour qu'elles incorporent ce nouveau résultat.

Souvenons-nous qu'il y a à peine un siècle les époux Sklodowska-Curie découvraient un phénomène étrange que nous appelons aujourd'hui radioactivité et qu'à la même époque, J.J. Thompson découvrait l'électron. Des centrales nucléaires à l'électronique, les applications de ces deux découvertes ont bouleversé notre vie quotidienne. Seul l'avenir nous dira quelles seront les conséquences de cette mystérieuse accélération de l'expansion de l'univers sur notre vie quotidienne.

Quoi qu'il en soit, les astrophysiciens à l'origine de ce résultat ont soulevé le couvercle d'une boite de Pandore et ce qui va en sortir pourrait avoir des conséquences énormes.

annonces classées

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BÉNÉVOLAT

Le Comité québécois pour la reconnaissance des droits des travailleurs haitiens en République dominicaine; OSBL, est à la recherche de deux bénévoles pour traduction anglaise et/ou espagnole. Pour information P. Joseph Tél: (514) 523-2434.

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Les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois

A la recherche de l'inspiration perdue

LoïcBernard

Il était une fois au Québec, le cinéma. Celui qui faisait rêver, pleurer, frémir, bondir et rire. Aujourd'hui, il cherche, explore et questionne en s'éloignant le plus possible du simple plaisir de divertir. La semaine dernière à la Cinémathèque québécoise, les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, ont de nouveau affirmé un malaise qui règne présentement dans l'industrie cinématographique québécoise.

La relève du cinéma québécois se trouve dans ces jeunes réalisateurs qui, sous la forme de courts-métrages, tentent d'exprimer ce qui plus tard pourrait leur valoir une place respectable en tant que cinéastes. Leurs oeuvres démontrent qu'il ne suffit plus de belles histoires ou de grosses explosions pour faire du cinéma.

La caméra a remplacé la plume, devenant l'outil alternatif de l'auteur pour exprimer un sentiment ou une simple appréciation d'un moment. Le court-métrage devient en quelque sorte l'équivalent de la nouvelle littéraire. Mais en bout de ligne, les messages transmis sont plus ou moins compréhensibles. « L'air de la Havane », un court-métrage d'Anick Saint-Louis, se veut être un simple regard discret de la ville. Dix minutes d'images collées les unes aux autres sans lien et sans explication. Aussi une preuve qu'il n'est pas conseillé de filmer à vélo... Ou encore « En deça du réel », une fable-vidéo qui joue avec le temps. Une femme seule dans un espace vide rit, pleure et danse. On nous dit qu'il faut « entrer dans les replis de la réalité. Voir entre les lignes ». Malheureusement, le spectateur est harcelé par les mouvements d'une femme qui ne trouve pas de réponse à son problème ni de questions propices à une problématique. Le cinéma devient une aventure, comme une balle jetée qui rebondit sans savoir où elle va atterrir. Pour le pur poète en quête de la vérité suprême, le chemin est encore long. L'inaccessibilité de son oeuvre la rend dure à supporter.

En contre-partie l'artiste sait parfois se servir de la caméra comme pinceau. Il peint à l'aide d'images un tableau vivant dont le sujet n'est rien d'autre que l'imagination et la sensibilité de son auteur. Georges Sheehy et son « Rien à l'horizon » le démontre. Ce « montage saccadé d'images sur une musique rave » séduit par sa beauté, sa simplicité et son rythme.

L'abstraction cinématographique pose problème non pas dans ses idées mais bien évidemment dans la façon de les exprimer.

On attribue cela souvent au manque de budget sans pourtant remettre en question la qualité même des œuvres et le talent de leurs auteurs. La relève cinématographique québécoise est très fragile. Déchirée entre une envie de se coller aux clichés commerciaux américains et le désir de trouver son inspiration dans la sensibilité du cinéma européen, les jeunes cinéastes québécois demeurent coincés dans ce rêve de pouvoir un jour se distinguer des autres formes cinématographiques. On voit ainsi apparaître un cinéma dans les courts-métrages qui se rapproche d'un lyrisme philosophique souvent retrouvé aujourd'hui dans les nouvelles tendances, que ce soit dans la danse, la musique ou le théâtre. Ce type d'œuvre demeure encore dans l'ombre dans l'espoir de trouver un jour un public prêt et assez ouvert pour l'applaudir.

Le marché au Québec est comme toujours trop petit pour que son cinéma s'épanouisse comme il le voudrait. En sortant de la projection du dernier film de Roger Cantin, *La vengeance de la femme en noir*, un spectateur a ironiquement déclaré être satisfait de savoir où l'argent des contribuables s'en allait. Frustré d'avoir perdu son temps à voir un mauvais film, on réalise qu'il y a un essoufflement de créativité au Québec. Le cinéma québécois, de par ses quelques succès antécédents a réussi à se créer une place dans le domaine du cinéma mondial. Mais cette place vieillit et ne survivra pas, même avec les 4 millions et plus que *Les Boys* ont pu générer et l'achat des droits par les Américains du script de *Louis 19, roi des ondes*. Ni avec un bon film par année. Chaque succès fait croire à un nouveau souffle qui à la fin n'est pas suivi.

Les Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois servent de tremplin à ces jeunes réalisateurs parmi lesquels on doit trouver un gagnant et remettre un prix et une bourse. Trop d'artistes au Québec rêvent sans nous faire rêver. Les auteurs semblent filmer pour eux et non pour nous. Si l'artiste se détache de son public, ce dernier ne fera sûrement pas l'effort de le retenir. Si le public québécois ne parvient pas à faire survivre son cinéma, c'est parce que l'artiste ne parvient pas à le convaincre de par son art.

Dans les coulisses de l'Amérique francophone

Patrick Primeau

À l'extérieur des frontières du Québec, la culture francophone demeure plutôt discrète mis à part dans quelques régions limitrophes comme le Nouveau-Brunswick. Mais qu'en est-il du fait français chez nos voisins du sud ? Y a-t-il une place pour la culture francophone au coeur du géant américain ?

Pour la plupart d'entre nous, l'Amérique francophone est souvent une expression qui désigne le Québec puisque la belle province représente après tout le noyau de la francophonie en Amérique du nord. Cependant, nous avons tendance à oublier que la réalité française traverse les frontières québécoises. Le continent américain avait jadis une forte présence francophone et les vestiges de celle-ci demeurent toujours vivants.

À la sauce cajun

C'est le cas notamment d'un état du sud des États-Unis, la Louisiane (reconnue d'abord et avant tout pour le caractère unique de ses villes comme la Nouvelle-Orléans et Bâton-Rouge) qui renferme encore aujourd'hui une communauté francophone ; population qui descend majoritairement des Acadiens, déportés de la Nouvelle-Écosse (anciennement l'Acadie) en 1755. Dans cette région, loin du plus grand bassin francophone qu'est le Québec, la langue française a survécu pendant tout près de trois siècles.

D'ici peu, les Cajuns (nom donné aux Acadiens par les colons anglais) de la Louisiane feront certainement les manchettes. L'année prochaine, ceux-ci organiseront un festival afin de célébrer 300 ans d'implication française dans la région. La « FrancoFête »,telle que nommée par les organisateurs de l'événement, se veut une célébration mondiale qui réunira tous les membres de la diaspora acadienne. Cette initiative démontre à quel point les francophones de la région sont fiers de leur héritage, et qu'ils luttent, encore aujourd'hui, pour conserver leur culture particulière.

Pour preuve, un avocat reconnu à Lafayette (municipalité de la Louisiane) a entrepris des démarches contre la couronne britannique. La raison? Celui-ci veut que l'Angleterre offre des excuses aux descendants des Acadiens pour la déportation de 1755. En s'adressant à un tribunal international, celui-ci croit qu'il recevra ce qu'il désire, et que ceci représentera le clou de la « FrancoFête » de 1999.

Des Québécois au pays de l'Oncle Sam

Dans le programme du Parti québécois, les États-Unis sont très souvent considérés comme une menace envers la culture québécoise et la francophonie en général. Considérant que nos voisins du sud influencent la société nord-américaine de façon plutôt aggressive, on peut se demander s'il existe une réelle ouverture pour les Québécois francophone dans ce monde anglo-saxon. Et on ne parle pas ici des Céline Dion de ce monde, qui percent aux États-Unis en utilisant la langue de Shakespeare, mais plutôt de ceux qui diffusent à l'étranger la culture typiquement québécoise..

Ainsi, pour découvrir quels sont les liens culturels qui unissent les Québécois aux Américains, la ministre de la Culture et des Communications, Louise Beaudoin, a entrepris dernièrement un périple de trois jours à New-York et à Philadelphie. À sa grande surprise, elle rencontra de nombreux diffuseurs de la culture québécoise dans ces deux villes. Bien sûr, elle savait de prime abord que certains Québécois ont percé chez nos voisins (notamment Robert Lepage et l'OSM) mais elle n'en mesurait pas l'ampleur réelle.

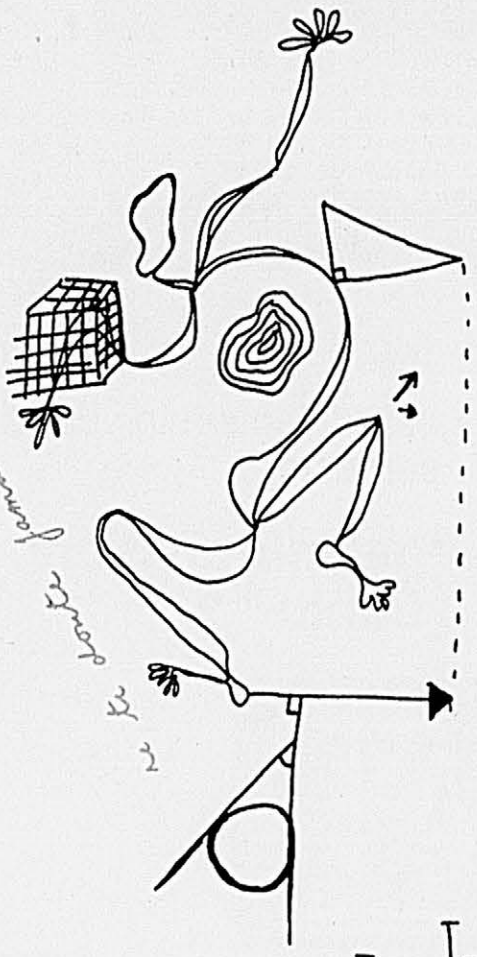
À New-York, on peut même y découvrir un « Festival Montréal » qui rend hommage à la créativité des artistes de chez nous. Ceci n'est qu'un exemple parmi tant d'autres qui rendent la ministre plutôt optimiste, même si elle admet que « la culture américaine est pesante sur le plan international ».

Vive la francophonie !

Comme ces deux exemples nous le démontrent, la culture française n'a pas à se plier devant la culture américaine prédominante. Aux États-Unis, les Cajuns et les diffuseurs de la culture québécoise prouvent que le français peut survivre, voire même prospérer dans le bassin anglophone qui nous entoure. Ces cas nous font réfléchir sur les mesures qui devraient être entreprises pour protéger notre langue dans les siècles à venir.

De simples lois, comme celles contenues dans la Charte de la langue française, ne sont sans doute pas une garantie de survie pour le français. Des institutions culturelles et communautaires demeurent définitivement primordiales pour la sauvergarde de notre chère Amérique francophone. N'oublions pas que la langue est souvent synonyme de culture, et que celle-ci vit davantage dans les réalisations artistiques et sociales que dans les mesures coercitives, si convaincantes soit-elles.

que puis-je savoir ?



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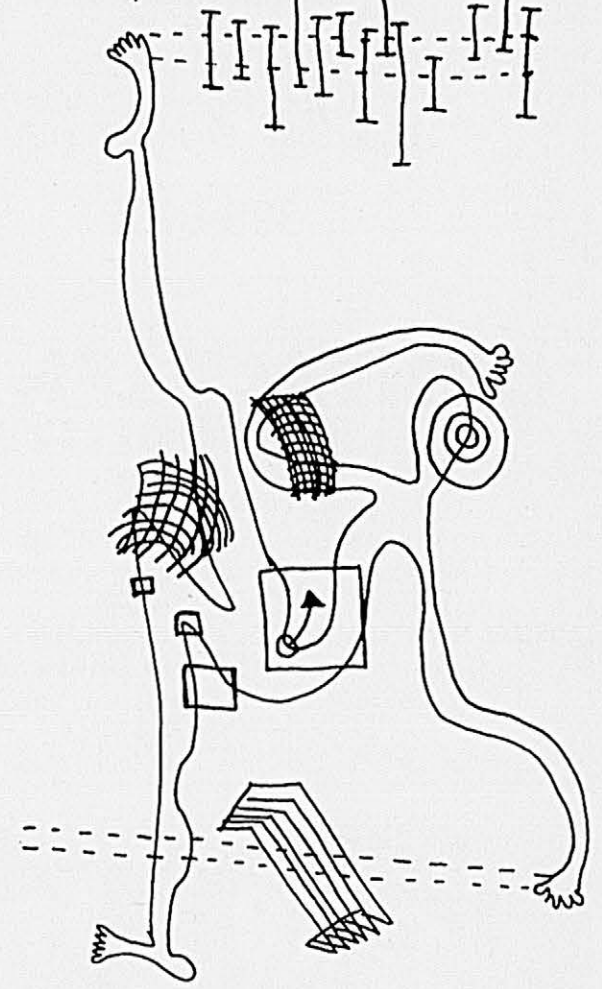

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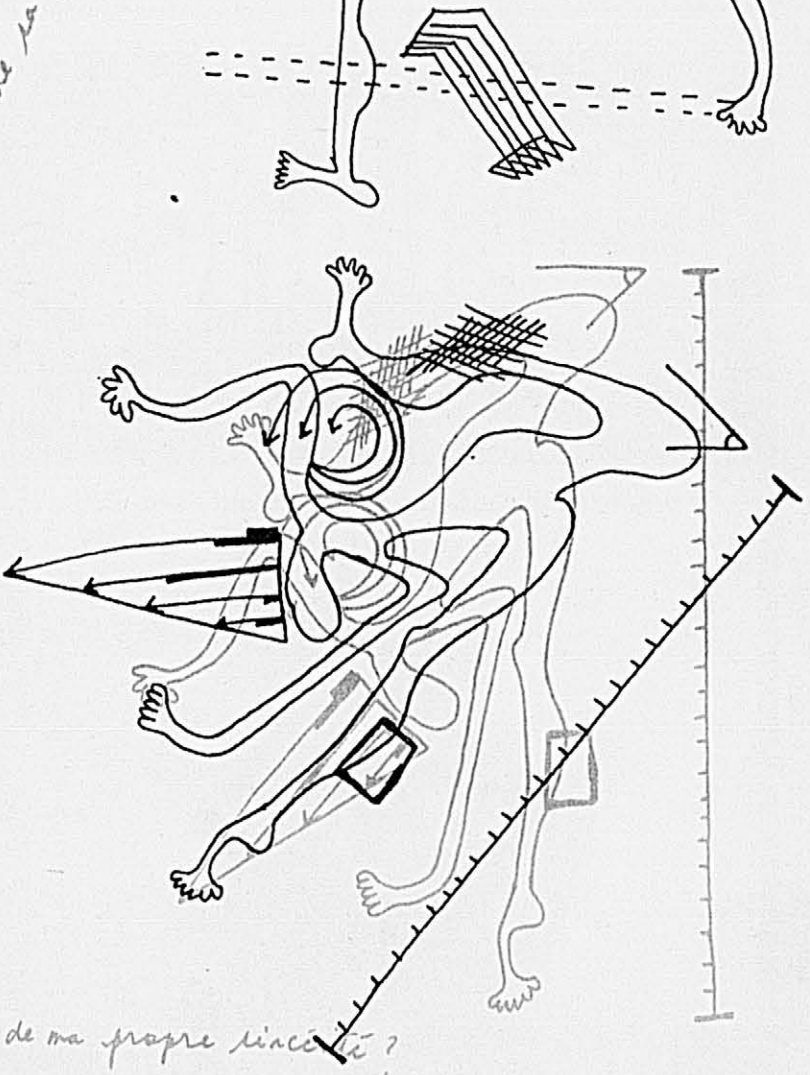

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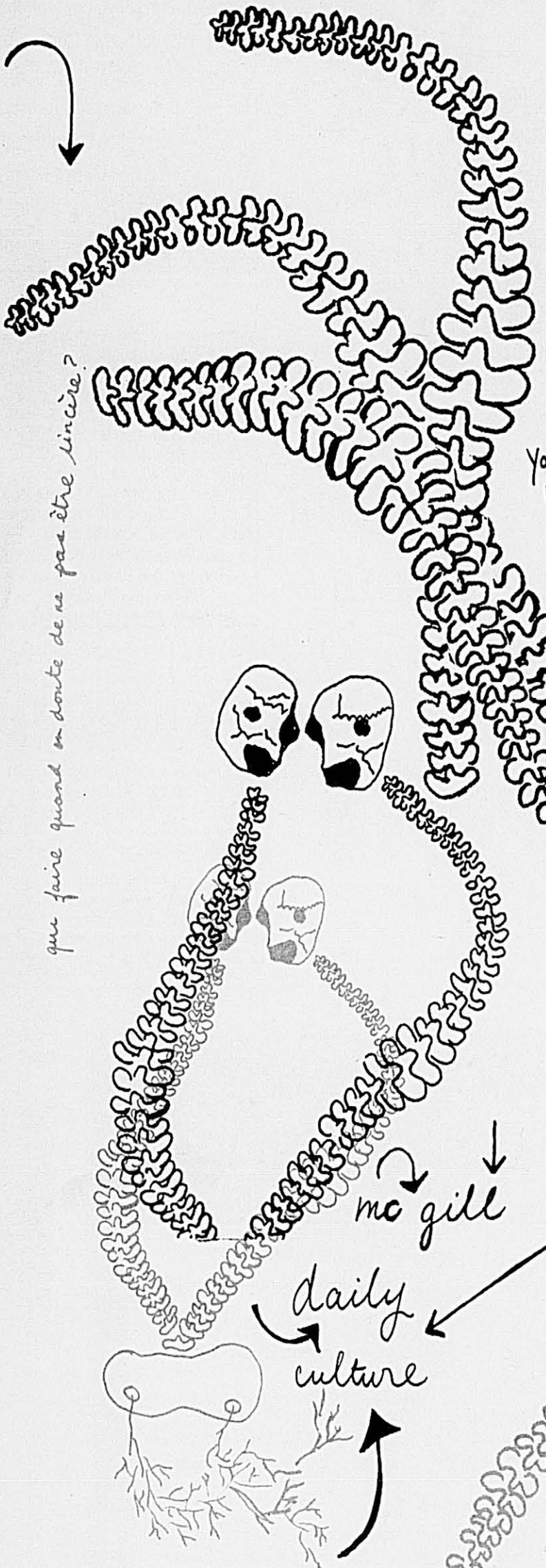

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Reading By Number$

McGill sells out to Chapters

by Sonia Verma

Following months of closed-door negotiations with Chapters Inc., McGill has rubber-stamped a deal to become the first Canadian university to outsource the management of its bookstore to the retail giant at an undisclosed price.

The five-year contract, ratified by McGill's Board of Governors on February 18, was based on a recommendation by a Bookstore Advisory Committee struck by the university last summer to weigh the option of outsourcing. Beginning March 1, Chapters will pocket all bookstore revenues and compensate McGill with an annual fee rumoured to approach $750,000, based on an offer made to the committee last year. Confidentiality clauses in the contract now prohibit either party from revealing the exact amount of money the university will garner from the deal.

"We felt it was not necessary or helpful to see numbers bandied about in the press," stated Phyllis Heaphy, VP Administration and Finance, who headed up the advisory committee.

According to Geoff Swift, director of college stores for Chapters, the company is projecting a financial windfall from the deal, expecting revenues to climb when McGill hands over management. A clause which boosts the annual fee Chapters pays McGill proportional to rising revenues sweetened the deal for the university's administration, Swift explained.

"If the store loses money, the university still gets the revenue. The bookstore gets significant dollars and beefs up inventory. Staff will see this as a great opportunity to get promoted from within," he said. "We're making it more user-friendly."

Chapters plans to install a cafÈ on the second floor, create a magazine and periodicals section and a lounging area to increase student traffic. The company also hopes to increase the list of titles the bookstore carries and expand used textbook sales. Despite the ambitious revenue projections, Swift maintains that Chapters is "committed to maintaining the textbook pricing policy. Prices will only go up because the supplier sets the cost, not because Chapters raises them," he said.

Adam Giambrone, who is running for vp Finance in this years Student Council elections, disagrees. "How are they going to make this money?" he questioned. "Even if it isn't on textbooks it might be on all other titles in the store."

Giambrone alsotakes issue with the university underwriting the bookchain which has been criticized stifling small book publishers out of the bookselling market with its volume-based approach to sales. "If your an author and you can't sell 100 000 copies then your publisher can't sell your books to Chapters. This has serious consequences for Canadian publishing," he said.

The deal has raised more than a few eyebrows among bookstore staff as to why McGill entered negotiations with Chapters to outsource management for an operation that consistently posted profits. In an earlier interview with the Daily, when negotiations with Chapters first got underway, Horst Bitschofsky, manager of the McGill Bookstore confirmed that the operation was "not in financial trouble."

Heaphy also concedes that "there was no need as such to outsource management - we had and continue to have a well-run bookstore. It was felt by the people who looked at this issue, specifically a workgroup consisting of four students and four academics, that we could do even better by outsourcing the management to Chapters."

The secrecy surrounding the negotiations and sketchy terms of the contract has frustrated bookstore employees and students. Chapters has confirmed that workers will remain employees of McGill University, but says job descriptions may change. Employees, for their part, claim they have been left in the dark about what impact the new management will have on their jobs. "We're basically being told nothing," a full-time bookstore employee commented under the condition of remaining anonymous. "Right now everyone is feeling very insecure about their jobs, whether their jobs will change, or whether they'll have jobs at all when Chapters takes over."

An advisory committee, consisting of four McGill representatives and one Chapters official will review the transition of management to Chapters and help mediate any employee concerns stemming from the new contract.

Chapters has poised itself to break into the university market with an aggressive expansion plan which could see the chain installed in university bookstores across the country. Swift says outsourcing deals are already in the works with at least two other Canadian universities and talks are well underway with several others. He refused to disclose which universities Chapters is negotiating with. "It's my guess that bookstore staff may not have even been informed that we're talking with their bosses," he said.

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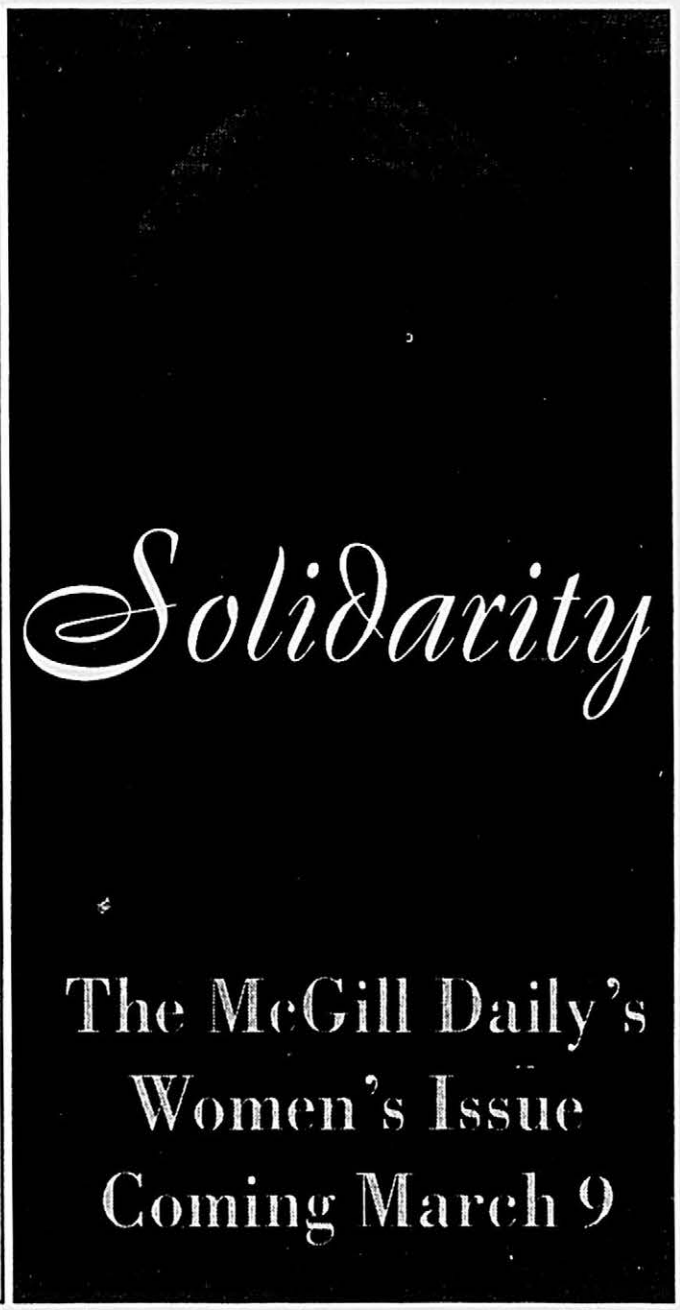
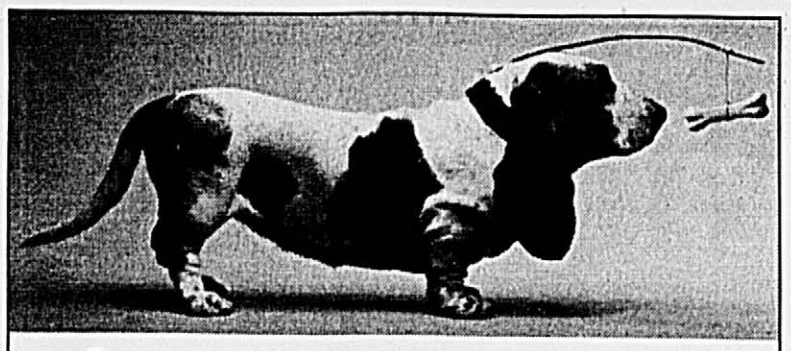


Erratum

The Daily regrets having not given credit to François Bergeron for his pictures in the article 'Courageous Feminism Power' (Culture FEb. 19).



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YOUViLLEart

When taverns become galleries and the neon lights go out

by Anna Alfredson

Montréal's knack of tucking works of art work into small corners and unusual places is only a small manifestation of the city's unique character. Things just tend to turn up where you would least expect them. A cathedral stands amidst the neon lights on St. Catherine and in old Montréal; and a tavern is the sight of an art installation. Another aspect to Montréal's character is it's steady decline. Although in many ways the city is still one of the liveliest I've known, it is impossible to deny the swiftly fleeing businesses and the row upon row of boarded up doors in Old Montréal. Place d'Youville is one such depressed area encompassing blocks of empty storefronts and deserted buildings. But this street is also home to the Tavern Youville which strives to survive in face of the city's decline.

The building that houses the tavern has been owned by one family for 150 years. With this area of Montréal on the decline the family wants to sell the building. One of the sons, Peter Ward is now the sole owner of Tavern Youville. The customers, tavern workers and Peter himself are all worried that this could be the end of one of the oldest taverns in Quebec.

One problem is that a place like Tavern Youville is not easy to find. There aren't many people meandering through Old Montréal at night any more. Club culture has withdrawn much of its scene from it and headed for St. Laurent or St. Catherine. But not being in the mainstream of things also serves as a nice retreat. So when a group of young artist friends somehow found Tavern Youville, they grew fast friendships with the management and came up with a plan to both save the tavern and promote their own art.

The Tavern Youville is playing gallery for the artist-curated installation entitled *YOUViLLE art* but you wouldn't know it from a casual peruse about the place. Inspiration for the exhibit was the artists' love of the tavern's character and a desire to keep it up and running. They worked to ensure that their art would not overpower the subtle character of the tavern. In fact, the art pieces blend in so well with the tavern that some of them are hard to find. Much of it was created to look as if it had been a part of the tavern for years. One piece, a joint effort by Justin Stephens and Joey Dubuc, is a framed newspaper clipping produced at the McGill Daily and then yellowed and torn to affect aging. Justin Stephens explained that the artists were "trying to fit with the bar context without posing a threat." The tavern is allowed to retain the identity which is largely generated by the management and customers as opposed to decor or music. The artists have succeeded in creating a space where people can "experience the bar without the encumbering contextual pitfalls of the art gallery."

The spirit of Tavern Youville is not easy to come by in an urban culture of strobes and thumping bass. This alone makes the Tavern Youville one of Montréal's truly unique night spots: there are no themes or gimmicks here, just an antique tin roof, an upright piano, a crowd of friendly faces and a lot of provoking, albeit subtle art. A good deal of the tavern's spirit resonates off of the manager, Janice Petersen. While tending bar she declares absolute rule over the tavern and it's customers. She both keeps the peace and draws the laughs. And if you've left for the evening without receiving a farewell hug from Janice, you can be sure that you've done something very, very wrong. But if you're really lucky, not only will you leave with a hug, but a slew of stories that have grown up out of the tavern.

Stories are easy to come by in a place that's been around for over one hundred years and continues to draw in the regulars who have witnessed nearly half of it's existence. So it's never long before tales arise of showering beer and why the tavern is nicknamed 'the cow shed'. But stories are always in the making and the artists of *YOUViLLE art* are part of a new generation of Montrealers breathing life into this tavern. And, fortunately, for those of us who missed the exhibit opening, a closing party is being arranged for March 14... see you there!

**YOUViLLE art* at 356 Place d'Youville Feb. 14 to March 14*

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Events

Thursday, March 5

Habitat for Humanity, an international group which builds low-income housing through volunteer labour, is starting a club at McGill. To find out more come to our meeting 1730h in the Architecture Bldg Room 101. Info: 843-6723.

The McGill Black Students' Network will be having a general meeting in room B-9/B-10 of the Student's Union (Shatner) at 18h.

Friday, March 6

McGill Romanian Students' Association invites students and faculty to taste authentic Romanian food and learn about their culture at their Spring Fest, Shatner 109.

Saturday, March 7

A day of seminars, interactive presentations and panel discussion to expand your awareness and examine the financial, technological, cultural and global implications of a nation without scientific research. A $7 registration fee includes lunch. Info: 282-8189.

Monday, March 9

Peer Health Education will be screening the film *Warrior Marks* by Alice Walker at the Newman Centre on Peel St, 15-17h. The free event will be followed by a facilitated discussion about the admittedly sensitive issue of female circumcision/female genital mutilation. Info: 398-6017.

Beyond

The World University Service of Canada of Concordia presents author and social activist Patrick Borden speaking and facilitating a discussion on *Anarchism & Civil Disobedience*. On March 18, in the Graduate House lobby, 2030 Mackay, 16-18h. No charge.

The Faculty of Arts presents two interdisciplinary conferences on *Literature and the Construction of National Identity* March 19 and 20 in the Thomson House Ballroom, McGill University, 3650 McTavish. All are welcome.

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SSMU Presidential Candidates Clash in Visions

Various views on what to do with differential fee lawsuit

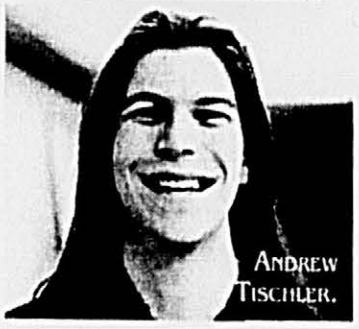
by Jason Chow

The same rhetoric circulates through yet another SSMU Presidential race.

However, according to SSMU Presidential candidate Paul Ruel, "This is an opportunity for growth for SSMU." "McGill and SSMU need revitalization," claims candidate Duncan Reid. "We need to see things happen," lauds third hopeful Andrew Tischler.

DUNCAN REID

PAUL RUEL


ANDREW TISCHLER.

So what are the agendas behind their lofty ideals?

Ruel sees the next three years as a crucial period that is "fundamentally going to change its services." The construction of the new Student Services building that will be in operation in the fall of 1999 presents great opportunities for changes and growth, according to Ruel.

With the aid of KPMG's consultation, Ruel believes that the organization can seek a relevant mandate and find a "much better way that SSMU could spend its $2.5 million."

Present SSMU VP Finance Reid echoes the same sentiments. According to Reid, a new mandate for SSMU is needed. With the help of KPMG, the organization could "help to find a common goal."

But beyond all this abstract talk of mandates, goals, etc., what concrete results can students expect from their candidates?

If elected, Tischler hopes to establish a travel co-operative to lower transportation costs for students returning home during breaks. He would also see to the formation of a service with the specific purpose of researching and disseminating information on policy changes that affect students, such as scholarship and bursary qualifications.

Ruel sees the need for increased involvement in administrative decisions. "SSMU must take a strong stand against the administration and involve [itself] with policy and budget decisions." Ruel complains of SSMU's present "token role" in McGill's decision-making bodies and if elected, hopes to increase representation on the Board of Governors, the highest governing board of the university.

Reid would like to see the establishment of a series of lectures for students, featuring prominent figures. Also, he hopes to construct a McGill Access Fund that would give bursaries to those who "are 'maxed out' on loans." To encourage recycling and efficiency, Reid would also like to establish an SSMU environmental commission.

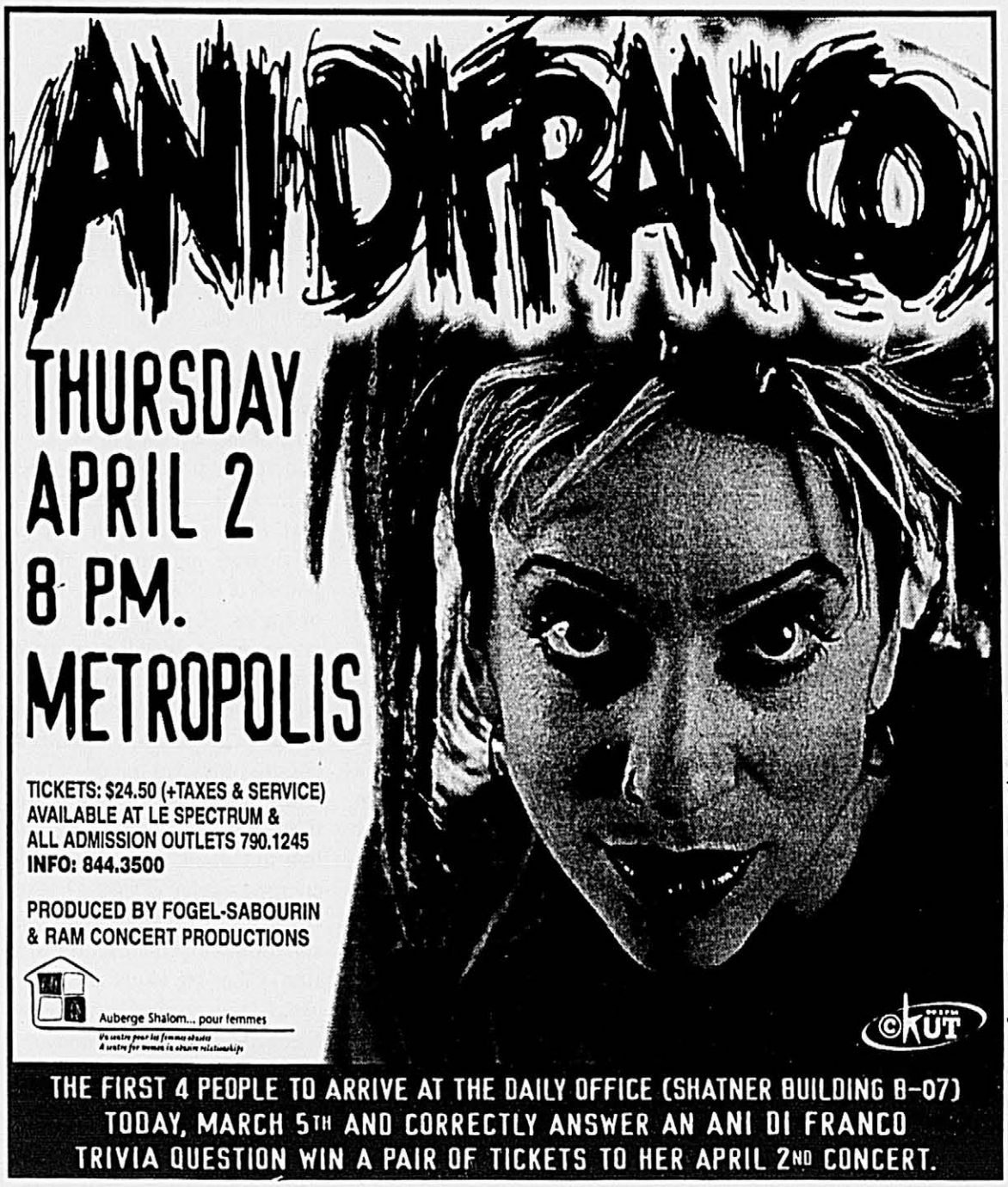
Both Ruel and Reid agree on the need to further pursue the differential tuition case. Ruel, the main plaintiff on the case, is "absolutely committed to see it through to the end" as the appeal process begins. The fees set a "detrimental precedent" on national post-secondary education, argues Reid.

Tischler disagrees with the continuance of the lawsuit. "I think we took the judicial path as far as we could," said Tischler. Rather, he would like to see a more concerted effort to lobby the government with other schools: "The best way is to see what we have in common with other universities and lobby together."

The problem of McGill's tradition of student apathy remains. All three candidates hope to increase awareness by being more responsive to student concerns. (haven't we heard this before?) "People aren't going to vote if it isn't important to them," said Ruel.

But Tischler does not believe that apathy is a problem at McGill. Students have concerns, he argues, and "it's up to us to find out what those issues are and how to put them together."

The candidates will face off at a debate on March 9 at 6pm at Gert's in the Shatner Building. Voting will take place on March 10, 11, and 12.



What We Eat *Shapes* The World We Live In

Joseph Pace talks about food and the environment

by Brian Thom

Joseph Pace has a message for Canadians: what we eat has a profound effect on the environment. If we can give any credence to the facts and figures that roll off his tongue, then this is a important message indeed. Pace is working on an Independent Research BA degree at the University of Waterloo. This free-form degree has taken him to factory farms and through agriculture industry trade journals instead of regular university class rooms and exam schedules. The result of his degree will be the publication of a book which he calls "Diet for A New Canada." Following his three day Montreal lecture tour, sponsored by EarthSave Montreal (one of the QPIRG McGill working groups), the Daily had the opportunity to interview Pace about the relationship between the food choices we make and the state of the environment.

Daily: Can you give an overview of some of the issues of how food relates to the environment?

Pace: A good place to start is with the population increase, which is expected to go up by 50% by the year 2030 to 8.8 billion people. One of the major mistakes of Environmental science and statistics of population analysis and projections is that people forget to include livestock in their forecast for population increase. Currently in the world we are outnumbered 3:1 by livestock. The total weight of livestock outweighs the human population by one and one-half times. In the last 40 years, the global cattle population has increased by 100% and the global fowl population by 200%. In 1950 there were about 18 kilograms of meat per capita. Now we are at 35.4 kilograms of meat per capita, 48 years. So, at the same time one child dies of starvation or malnutrition every 2.3 seconds, so many more heads of livestock are being fed. There is a corresponding link between the fact that there is significant world hunger and at the same time we are feeding more and more of our grain to livestock. In terms of our consumer oriented culture, the food we eat is a major consideration. A lot of time and money goes into producing that food. Agriculture Canada says that it takes four acres of land to produce enough food for each Canadian for a year. If you look at the United Nation statistics, you can easily determine that it would take about one half an acre of land to feed someone on a plant-based diet. That's 8 times more land for somebody eating a standard diet than somebody eating a plant-based diet. The western diet, which is taking off all over the world (unfortunately) is a very energy and resource intensive way to eat. Because so much land is required, obviously that has an effect on soil cover, top soil erosion, water use, water pollution and desertification. The main point to understand in relationship to land use is that it takes 16 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef; it takes 8.4 pounds of grain to produce one pound of pork and it takes four pounds of grain to produce one pound of chicken. In the process of cycling that grain through livestock, 90% of the protein is lost, 99% of the carbohydrates and 100% of the fibre. So in terms of generating healthful foods, it is not an efficient process. You end up with a high fat, high cholesterol food that is actually responsible for most of the degenerative diseases in our culture. 77% of Canada's net cereal crops are currently fed to livestock. 8/10 of all the land you see as you drive through the country-side is devoted to the production of livestock. In the US, 90% of the soy, 80% of the corn and 70% of the total grain is fed to livestock. It is a major consideration. If you have an acre of prime land, you can grow 30,000 pounds of carrots, 20,000 pounds of apples, 40,000 pounds of potatoes, but only 250 pounds of beef. It takes forty times more fossil fuel energy to produce a pound of protein from meat, as it does to produce a pound of protein from wheat. So, even if you think that there is so much protein in meat, it costs that much energy. So definitely this is not an efficient process at all. Land use and the basic inefficiency is just a start. Other big issues are water use and water pollution. One cow produces the waste of 16 humans. So if you have a feed lot of 10,000 cattle, that equivalent to a city of

One of the major mistakes of Environmental science and statistics of population analysis and projections is that people forget to include livestock in their forecast for population increase. Currently in the world we are outnumbered 3:1 by livestock. -Pace

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At a purely physical level, I am just trying to encourage people to look at their food choices and make educated decisions. We have been indoctrinated by the four food groups, which were created by the food industry and we basically eat what we have been told to eat since we were children. I think if people see the options that they have and they understand that they have control over most degenerative diseases, they have an impact on the way animals are treated and they also have a tremendous impact on the environmental situation, I think that they will choose to make changes in their diet that reflect that awareness.

160,000 people. For each kilogram of beef produced, 40 kilograms of manure have been produced, and something has to happen to that manure. In North America, we have a quarter of a million pounds per second of excrement going into the environment. A large egg factory produces 82 tonnes of manure a week. A large pig factory produces 3,000 tonnes of manure a week. A 1993 Ontario study showed that 43% of all the wells tested had bacteria, nitrates, herbicides or fecal coliform levels exceeding provincial standards. So ground water contamination is a major issue of livestock.

Daily: Can you put that into context of what vegetable agriculture produces with herbicides, pesticides and fertilizers?

Pace: One thing to understand when comparing animal-based agriculture and plant-based agriculture is that up to 90% of plant-based agriculture is going to animal-based agriculture anyway. So if we have 7/8 or 8/10 of the land we are using being devoted to animals, then we have to take into account that 7/8 or 8/10 of the pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizer run-off from that land being directly attributable to livestock. Organic permaculture is definitely the way to go. I'm not in favour of mono-culture cropping. Ten thousand acres of hybrid corn is not something I think is a good idea at all and I don't think that just because you start eating a plant-based diet that you have extracted yourself from the agri-business industry and it's effect on the environment. If we moved away from animal-based agriculture completely, we would still have to deal with our dependency on fertilizers and pesticides and herbicides. Fortunately, when people do start moving away from animal products, they start opening up to the idea of permaculture and organic foods and local foods.

Daily: What kind of food economies should we be moving towards? Local foods, organic foods, imported out-of-season foods; what are the economies working here?

Pace: The most important move is towards farmer's markets. It gives family farmers the sense of importance and dignity they deserve. Large companies like Cargil (the world's largest, privately owned company which controls up to 60% of the world's grain, 12% of Canada's) often overshadow or undermine the work of family farmers. So, buying food, organic or not, is one of the first steps you can take to reverse this trend to large mono-culture agribusiness. However, because of the climate in Canada, we are going to still have to import some of our food.

Myself, I grow a lot of my own food at home. I soak and grow a lot of my own sprouts. You can sprout your lentils and peas and things like that. People that have a bit of space in their backyard can start their own garden. It's amazing how much a small tract of land can produce in a summer.

So if you have a feed lot of 10,000 cattle, that equivalent to a city of 160,000 people. For each kilogram of beef produced, 40 kilograms of manure have been produced, and something has to happen to that manure. In North America, we have a quarter of a million pounds per second of excrement going into the environment.

Daily: A lot of people wondering about these issues think: Well, how much difference am I really making here? How big is the meat industry? How big is vegetarianism?

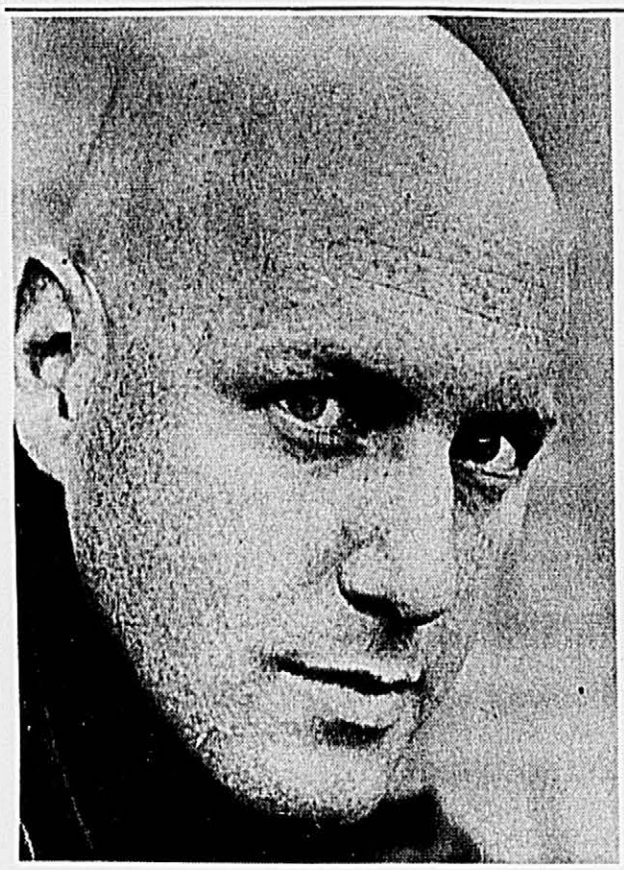
Pace: Currently 3 to 4% of the Canadian population is vegetarian, 7% of the American population and about 20% of the British population. In countries like India, this figure is 70-80%. World-wide, about 4 billion people eat very little meat and no dairy products. So in the western world, we are kind of in the minority. And the trends are shifting. If you just take a look at a big food chain like subway, their number one selling sub globally is the Vegi-Delight. And vegetarian food options in air plane flights go up something like 100% every year. So there is obvious indicators that shifts towards plant-based foods are occurring. Five percent of the Canadian teenaged population is vegetarian. It is between 15-20% of young Canadian women. There are big changes happening now. This shift makes a big difference environmentally. A 10% reduction in the consumption of animal products in North America would free up enough grain to feed one hundred million people. When someone quits eating meat for a year, they would save 1 acre of trees. It takes 2500 gallons of water to produce a pound of meat - that's half a year of showering. A quarter pound of beef originating in a rain forest is responsible for 55 square feet of rain forest destruction. And we import 50 to 100 million pounds per year of rain forest beef in Canada. So little changes make a big difference. People's personal food choices are ultimately important.

Daily: So given all this, what is your vision for the future? What do you see as the kinds of decisions we should be making?

Pace: At a purely physical level, I am just trying to encourage people to look at their food choices and make educated decisions. We have been indoctrinated by the four food groups, which were created by the food industry and we basically eat what we have been told to eat since we were children. I think if people see the options that they have and they understand that they have control over most degenerative diseases, they have an impact on the way animals are treated and they also have a tremendous impact on the environmental situation, I think that they will choose to make changes in their diet that reflect that awareness.

In terms of perception, outlooks, and attitude changes, I would be really happy if people started to feel they belonged in the natural world. People don't grow their own food. They don't pick their own food. We are separated. We also have this illusion that we are not animals, that we are somehow beyond the natural realm. I think we have to re-insert ourselves into the natural order. I think that will give us a sense of belonging and respect and kind of an inherent environmental outlook. I think that if you feel that you are a part of a system and that you want to maintain that system in a healthy way, and that you have respect for individual lives, that's the outlook that our culture needs to take. I think that if dietary changes came without that change in perspective, I don't think that they would last.

For more information, contact Earthsave Montréal at QPIRG-McGill (398-7432)



The shape of me
the architectur

Douglas Cooper is something of a pioneer. His second and most recent novel, *Delirium*, has been touted as the first to be published on the World Wide Web. But while he is happy to experiment with a new technological medium, his expresses more concern with participation in the world of literature than in the colonization of a new cultural frontier.

I spoke with him in the wavily semi-futuristic cafeteria of the CBC building on René-Levesque.

paul reeve: I'm not sure where to start...I find it funny: I just reread *Amnesia* [Cooper's first novel] yesterday - I'd read it a couple of times before... I didn't remember reading the part where you said that - well, actually it wasn't you, it was Izzy Darlow [*Amnesia*'s protagonist], I should be fair - he said that he'd never met anyone who'd learned French in the public schools of Ontario. I think you've met one person, at least one person now, in case that was your claim as well as Izzy's.

douglas cooper: Is your French good?

pr: My French is fairly good, I think.

dc: And you learned it in Ontario public schools?

pr: I did. In French Immersion, to be fair. I wasn't in the core French program.

dc: That's not the same thing. But yeah, okay. I'm talking about just the standard 12 years of poor French teaching that we're all exposed to.

pr: That's fair enough. I have some friends who went through the same thing and I also have some friends who went through the French Immersion program and they're not much better off than some of those other people. So I think it's a pretty exceptional experience, to actually have it work out. I have a friend, also, who went to UTS [University of Toronto School, a semi-private high school in T.O.].

dc: I went to UTS.

pr: Yeah, we were noting that, and I was just having a conversation with him about it today in class. He was sort of laughing about it, because he actually had a fairly positive experience with UTS. He's also an architecture student, interestingly enough.

dc: Is it known that I did not have a positive experience at UTS? I guess I've said that a couple times.

pr: It's known at least to people who read the interview with Shift. I think it's Shift... I'm not sure if it was Shift, or the one with Existere.

dc: I think UTS is probably finally a good thing. I've been told mine was the most appalling class in the history of that school.

pr: Really?

dc: Oh yeah, because it was the last all-male class. There was all sorts of sexual resentment flying around. We were the ones who didn't get girls. I mean, maybe individually we did, but our class did not.

pr: So right after that, it went coed, did it?

dc: Exactly. So we were the psychotic, sort of all-male cauldron, it was awful.

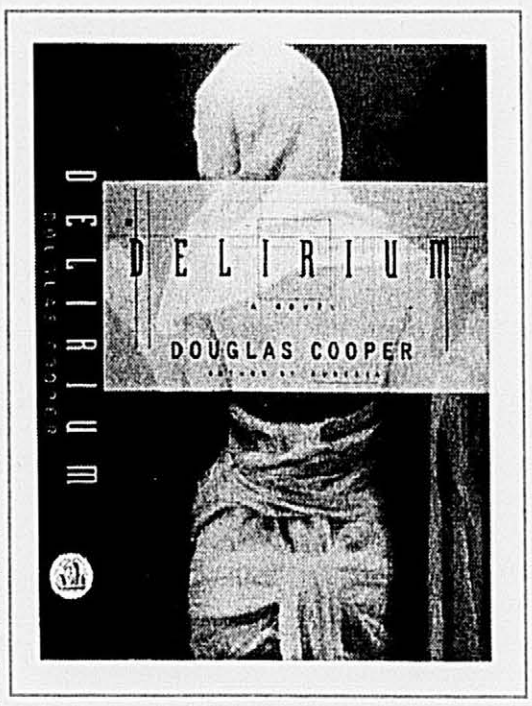
pr: Does any of that show up in either of your novels?

dc: Certainly the cruelty of adolescence is there in *Amnesia*. And *Delirium*, come to think of it...if you think about my biographer, and what he goes through. And I think someday I'm going to devote an entire book to it. It's a very difficult thing to write about, partially because the few books that have dealt with it are so good. *Lord of the Flies* is a masterpiece, and it's extremely hard to meet that standard. And *Cat's Eye* is probably, I think, Atwood's best novel, by a long shot. Partially because it's not ideological, and it deals with the truth of adolescent, and, well, pre-adolescent cruelty. I would want to do justice to the theme. It's an interesting and appalling theme.

pr: Right. I sympathize deeply with the impulse to try and talk about it. Also, of course, UTS is an experience you had within the context of growing up in Toronto. I get the message you have a rather negative image of Toronto. Or rather a feeling about sort of the character of Toronto as a city. And of course both of your novels have a lot to say about Toronto as a city.

dc: It's interesting how the press here has fastened on my loathing of Toronto, especially in *Delirium*. This is going to sound disingenuous, but I wasn't aware that *Delirium* was a book that could be read simply as a trashing of Toronto, which is how a number of people have read it. For me, Toronto is emblematic and it's archetypal. It figures in the novel as a type of city. Specifically, in *Amnesia*, the ahistorical city of the New World, cut off by a notion from its own memory, and in *Delirium*, as the archetypal modernist... the archetypal modern urban experiment. It's interesting that I say that, because there are those who I suppose would disagree with me. It seems Jane Jacobs, the great urban theorist, thinks Toronto's just fine. But she came to that conclusion rather late in life. I'm not sure she would have felt that had she been analyzing it thirty or forty years ago.

pr: I was just reading her book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, the really big one... she talks a lot about neighbourhoods, and about ways to construct... to provide the conditions for the development of vital neighbourhoods. Particularly, she seems to see as a component, neighbourhoods that maintain certain portions of their past even as they sort of move forward into futures that allow for development and growth of various sorts.



dc: ...And that's true of say Cabbagetown or Chinatown, but it's certainly not true of anywhere in Mississauga. It's not true of Scarborough, you know what I mean, or North York. I think she has kind of a blinkered sense... I'm saying this about the greatest urban thinker of all time, so I should watch what I say. I mean I think she's a remarkable woman, but I sometimes question her take on Toronto.

pr: Particularly you're interested in the question of how modernism has played a part in ... kind of paving over memory, trying to bypass what about the history of a city made it what it is. It sort of seems that you particularly characterize Toronto in that way. Have you seen signs of that in other cities that you've lived in?

dc: Oh... see yeah, it wouldn't have had to be Toronto, I could have set the city in Dallas, or Calgary. Not Montreal. Parts of this book are set in Montreal, but it's very much set beside Toronto and in contrast to Toronto. Because Montreal is not a city without a memory. However much it may have divorced itself deliberately from its memory, in the 60s, it did so in a kind of memorious way... which is, I'm not sure it's a word, but Borges used it.

pr: Yeah, in "Funes the Memorious".

dc: Things operate on two levels in a book like this. It's not just a novel of ideas. Clearly there's a humane component and a human component. And Toronto operates as a human city on that level, but it also....almost everything in the city operates as itself and as a type of itself. I'm always aware that there's a kind of abstract correlative to any individual thing that happens in any of my novels. And Toronto is very much acting as a kind of city. I keep trying to point that out to people, though everyone's dying to...Torontonians in particular love how much I seem to loathe their city - my city, I shouldn't even call it theirs.

pr: That's true - it's your city as well. That's interesting because part of what you're talking about is how people in cities tend to be sort of subject to the will of the people who are able to decide how cities are built.

dc: Yes and no. What happens is, the tyranny is never successful, as tyranny never is successful. In the way that the Soviet bloc gave rise to some of the most interesting and the most vibrant dissident literature perhaps of all time. That's a product of tyranny. That doesn't mean we should celebrate tyranny. But it's interesting that the attempt to suppress always gives rise to its opposite. Really the theme of this work – of both books, really – is that the attempt by modernist tyrants to suppress the life of the individual have given rise to this sort of sub-city in Toronto, a kind of dark underworld of everything that's supposed to be banned from the cityscape: sex, a kind of slightly violent communitarian ethos, all of that's there...and it is there in Toronto, you find it in Kensington market, you find it... Queen street gets gentrified – every time it happens on Queen street it only lasts for a year or two before the yuppies move in, but it's there, there's an impulse, you know...

pr: I was very struck by your Dark City metaphor.. I've been in and out of Toronto, I can't say that any of what you described when you were bringing this image of the Dark City... the sort of - "underbelly" is probably a bad word, because you're giving it in some sense a positive character, as an expression of something that's needed by people in a city that doesn't provide what they need through its design... I never really saw that in Toronto.

dc: It's hard to find. It's hidden. That's part of the point of this novel, is that you have to dig for it. There were a group of disaffected adolescents, wandering the streets looking for that. We knew it was out there. If you're at all intelligent, as a young person, you're aware there's more offered to you as a human being than official Toronto culture serves up. And you go looking for it, and you find it on Yonge street, and you find it in the ravines at night, and you find it by living slightly dangerously. And it's not always good for you. I have a lot of friends who were damaged by that search. On the other hand, had I not done it, I would have...God

mory, re of pain

A conversation with Douglas Cooper, author of Delirium, the Web's first novel

knows how dull I would have... I'd be dead.

pr: The ravine, in your first book, seems to me to play an extremely interesting symbolic role. Obviously, as you were mentioning, all of the parts of the city that you bring out in your novels play these double abstract and concrete roles. I saw the ravine as being in some sense a relatively obviously archetypal part of the story, and of the characters.

dc: People see it as the subconscious. That seems to be the reading of it. Which isn't entirely true, because that book is, among other things, a rejection of traditional depth psychology. So it functions in a way analogous to the way the construct of the subconscious functions in psychological thought, but there's something else going on there. It's not entirely unconscious, apart from everything else. The ravine is a conscious subversion of the daylight city. It's a place of rebellion. And rebellion is not a subconscious thing, necessarily; it's often very willful.

pr: Connected to what happened in the ravine in your story is the "myth of the usurper", which you talk about quite a bit. It seems to have a lot of connections to your ideas about the tyranny of modernism in cities.

dc: The myth of the usurper is interesting. It's not mine, it's Mary Shelley's. The idea of the Frankenstein myth - the modern Prometheus. Prometheus is somebody who usurps the role of the gods. He's somebody who takes upon himself, in an overweaning manner, more than he is cosmologically thought to be able to handle, and as a result his liver gets eaten eternally by vultures. And Frankenstein is subtitled "The Modern Prometheus", or "A Modern Prometheus". That's part of the protomodern myth, this idea of the usurper.

pr: Obviously the myth of the usurper comes up in connection with the religious and spiritual experiences of the characters. This is a question that seems to be quite important in both of your books: the question of the status of religion and spirituality in the lives of your characters. How does that relate to your own religious or spiritual sensibility?

dc: All my characters are lost, and they're all damned, to an extent. If I had to describe myself, it [would be] as a sort of mystical atheist, I suppose. I really believe in the value of religious experience, which doesn't mean that I'm capable, necessarily, of having it, or at least having it - certainly not in a very structured way. There's a whole tradition of modern thinkers who had an inordinate value for this experience which they were incapable of having. Wittgenstein is a prime example. Wittgenstein is held up by Anglo-American philosophers as the example of the rational man, who did away with all that mysterious stuff. But Wittgenstein himself admired Heidegger, and if you read the Tractatus, there are all sorts of passages about death and things that he's not supposed to be able to talk about, according to Wittgenstein. I'm very much intrigued by this secondary strand of modernism, which is quite mystical. Look at Kandinsky, the first abstract painter, if you like - there are other people placed at the beginning of abstraction elsewhere - but certainly a pivotal figure; [he] was undeniably a mystic. He had a full mystical agenda. Look at even earlier trends, Munk and Strinberg, for example, who gave rise, in my mind, to aspects of modern painting, and - more than aspects - gave rise to modern theatre... That is not Brecht. I'm not being very coherent here. The mainstream international-style strand of modernism is highly atheistic, and it's allied, in my mind, to Stalinism, to fascism, to international capitalism at its worst... But there is this other strand, and you find it in T.S. Eliot, you find it in the Symbolist poets, you almost find it in Wallace Stevens. He's kind of a mystical atheist, isn't he - sort of. I've never really quite figured out the balance in Stevens. But it's there. You find it in J.D. Salinger, [which] is kind of an example of the modern short story as mystical.

pr: You make some connections there between the anti-religious and atheistic portions of the thought of modernism and the politics of - you said fascism...

dc: Fascism is a mistake, actually, I take that back. Because fascism was a mystical agenda. Mysticism is dangerous. There's no getting around it. Fascism and Stalinism are linked in another manner. Fascism is not explicitly atheistic, the way Stalinism is. It's even more appalling. There's no doubt that the way certain mystical tendencies run awry [is] as dangerous as the Enlightenment told us [it] could be.

pr: The political currents you were willing to keep the association with were Stalinism and international capitalism. Your works don't have any overtly political character to them at all, as far as I can tell. I don't know if you would say they're personal, but they're novels that deal with the concerns of individuals within a certain experience, it seems to me. Is there any sort of connection, for you, [between your books and politics]?

dc: I'm glad you bring that up, because I don't want my works to be read as ideological. That's not why I'm writing them. I think this is the great period of Canadian literature, because we've finally managed to overcome ideology. First it was only feminist literature, then it was only multicultural literature, but now there's literature. Which is kind of a good thing. I don't want my works to be read ideologically; that said, I think that in a very broad sense, I take up political ideas. The next novel, which I'm in the midst of at the moment, specifically deals with economism: the fallacious tendency to reduce all of thought to economic trends. It's not that I have an allegiance, one way or another: I just see various bad ways of thinking. I look at someone like Camus, who's something of a hero, for me. At a time when everyone was an ideologue – Sartre was a Stalinist, the Algerian nationalists were trying to enroll him – he said something like "I would rather be wrong than be right and on the side of the death camps." And that's sort of how I feel. I can always see the problem with any one stance, and I'm always trying to remove myself from the tendency to see my thought become rigid. And even to say that I'm on the side of radical individualism would be a mistake, because I see problems with that in America. The communitarian position has a lot of value to it. I look at the Pope in Cuba, and the Pope is actually saying very interesting things in Cuba – no one is listening to him, because they're all too interested in Clinton and his twelve year-olds. The Pope isn't exactly telling us what the third way is, but he's simultaneously attacking Castroism, which is of course appalling, and American international capitalism. People are ignoring that side.

pr: At least in the media you wouldn't get too much of that. You mentioned individualism and its effects in the United States. Personally I would express a certain amount of skepticism that a lot of the problems with capitalism and the United States were a natural consequence of rampant individualism, but it ties back in to something you were saying in another interview.

dc: I hope I don't contradict myself too much.

pr: Particularly, you were talking about... uh, Canada's problems with mythology. I'll read a quotation that I wrote down just before, because I wanted to ask you about it specifically. You said, "We're very proud of not having an American-style historical mythology to hang our hats on. That's what keeps America vibrant. All those lies. Those lies are important."

dc: That's very interesting, that I said that. Whoever said that knew what he was talking about. What a horribly arrogant thing to say. I had a conversation last week about how Canada is finally permitting mythology into its literature. It's been there as a kind of undercurrent for a long time, but now that Ondaatje is front stage centre – this is the man who mythologizes the city. *In The Skin of a Lion* does for Toronto what *Coming Through Slaughter* does for New Orleans. It's an explicitly mythological agenda, if you like. I see it in other figures. The people who have always been important to me, as Canadian writers, are Judith Thompson, the playwright, who has an analogous sensibility, and a novel, *The Stud Horseman*, that I remember reading in high school. We're now permitted to mythologize ourselves in a way that we weren't before. And that's why, I think, I'm being read. I'm not sure I would have been read, 15 or 20 years ago, when it was realism with a healthy dose of ideology that was capturing the readers' imagination. I think that was probably true, when I said that, five years ago. We are beginning to have a mythology. We are beginning to give rise to a mythology.

pr: I don't know what *Delirium*'s status is, chronologically, as being a book published on the Internet – I guess the claim is that it's the first...

dc: It's not really a claim: it was the first. It was the first serialized on the Web. There might have been an FTP site out there, I don't know. Certainly it was the first serialized on the Web. The way I know this is because I beat the people who came second by two hours. We had a Rolling Stone journalist sitting at my shoulder, watching with a watch, because there was a race.

pr: What was the other one?

dc: The other one was Hotwired, *Wired*'s site. Who stole the idea from me. I used to write for *Wired* magazine. They decided they were going to serialize a novel on the Web. They knew that I was about to do it because I told them I was about to do it. So we geared up production and beat them. It was in the Wall Street Journal, it was in Rolling Stone, and Japanese Esquire: had there been another contender, believe me, I would have heard about it. I've heard of other people now calling themselves the first novel serialized on the Web, and I know when each of them launched, and it was long after mine. You can't keep other people from telling lies. Frankly, it's far more important to me that this be a good book than that it be the first of anything. But it does amuse me that other people are trying to steal the distinction.

pr: More generally: technology and literature. This is such a huge subject to introduce with like three minutes left in an interview. You seem to be an important person to ask about the implications of technologies for literature and its role.

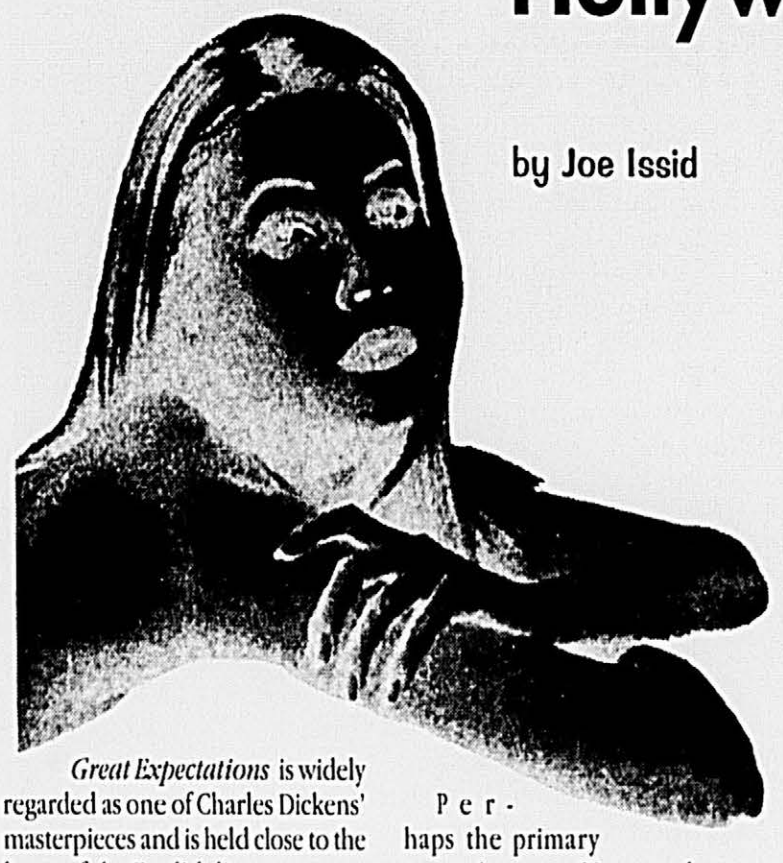
dc: Your tools change what you make, and media changes the way in which stories are distributed, and that's always been true. To write for a book is different than to write for a scroll, and to write with a word processor is different than to use a ballpoint pen. Whether it's better or worse, I'm a little bit neutral on the subject. I deliberately wrote the fourth part of *Delirium* with a pen, without a word processor, and I didn't put it up on the Web. As a kind of technological experiment, if you like. I'm interested in whether people find that fourth part different from the first three parts, and what that stylistic difference would be. There is no doubt that these choices matter. And I'm interested in the way they matter, I'm interested in the new problems that various new media present to you – how do you write stories for this medium, as opposed to that medium. Without being moralistic. I don't really want to stress that this medium is better. I happen to hate television, but it's because I hate what they put on television. I have no trouble with various video artists. Hill's work I think is phenomenal. And he uses the same cathode ray tube as the sitcoms. It really just depends on your approach. This doesn't answer your question because there is no answer. It's simply that the technology changes the shape. This is McLuhan's country, and what he was saying was at least partially correct.

Douglas Cooper's Delirium *is published by Random House Canada.*

DEFLATED Expectations

Hollywood bypasses Dickens' social insight

by Joe Issid



Great Expectations is widely regarded as one of Charles Dickens' masterpieces and is held close to the heart of the English literary canon. This engrossing tale that records an orphan's intimate yearnings against the backdrop of an era's social climate has been recently transposed onto the big screen. A high budget, star-studded film re-tells Dickens' story in a typically sensationalist manner that is offensive to the point of being almost rank. Why then is this most recent adaptation of Dickens' *Great Expectations* an insult to those who pay to see it?

As a cinematic piece, *Great Expectations* (starring Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow and Robert DeNiro) is visually stunning and its narrative is exciting enough. Much of the evocative power of the novel is effectively captured onto film (for example, the mystique of the manor that Pip visits is spectacular). However, the vision offered by the director conspicuously suffers from its awkward focus on the Dickens text. This problem arises from the overarching desire to transpose this nineteenth century novel into modern day America.

A trend has developed in Hollywood in which tales of old are transmuted by less than rare imaginations to the big screen. Following along the vein of previous revisionist interpretations such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Clueless* (from Jane Austen's *Emma*), *Great Expectations* fails to compellingly re-introduce this classic novel to a modern, movie-going audience. The contemporary settings of these aforementioned films destroy the very historical fibre of these respective texts. All of these pieces were created co-existingly to the beliefs and convictions of their respective societies. Why is Hollywood trying so hard to distort classic literature for its audience?

Perhaps the primary reason is money. Money and time are saved by 're-inventing' classical literature and throwing it into the cess-pool of modern popular culture and (in this case) hungrily turning a textually rich novel into an erotic, picaresque film. A large chunk of this films' revenue may come from the exposure of Gwyneth Paltrow's breasts and the sensual love scenes that occur between her and Ethan Hawke - unlikely to be as passionately favoured by Dickens himself.

Much of the novel's epic quality is lost, just as most of the characters are expelled. The grandeur of the novel and the extensive amount of characters must be expelled if the producers are to transform an elaborate novel into a ninety minute film. The length of the film suggests that the necessity of catering to moviegoers supersedes any accuracy of interpretation. Hollywood tends to shy away from more in-depth studies as audiences are less likely to watch, say, a three hour social commentary than a ninety minute escapist romance.

The fact that Pip's sister treats him with a certain degree of respect and affection demonstrates a willful neglect to Dickens' original character. This bowdlerised transformation serves little narrative purpose, as his sister makes an impromptu exit from the plot by inexplicably abandoning her family. In Dickens' novel, by contrast, she is portrayed as an over-bearing tyrant insistent on ostracizing Pip. This is an admittedly melodramatic characterization: the sister exists primarily to encourage the readers' sympathy towards Pip. However, the fact remains that the film's omission serves to evacuate some of the novel's dramatic tensions, offering a more diversionary spectacle to the audience.

An Idealized America

Hollywood filmmakers have immense difficulties in portraying American social classes. In *Great Expectations*, Pip's family lived in poverty. The absence of a meat pie from the larder was enough to have the young Pip beaten. His clothes were tattered and worn and very much characterised the sullen, orphaned child. Pip was mistreated and literally (as his name implies) spat out of the mouth of society, worthless as a pip. The fact that his name was changed to Finn in the film may seem irrelevant, but in fact helps to undermine Dickens' intent to portray his protagonist's social standing.

The family's poverty is not as effectively captured in the film. The famous passage in which Pip steals food for an escaped convict is tempered here. Finn gives the escaped convict an entire bottle of whisky, that is not at all missed by his family, whereas in the novel an outrage is caused by the absence of brandy. The family's impoverishment is played down, integral to the film's bypassing of any social inquiry.

The realities of the novel's depicted social structures are absent, though perhaps understandably, given the historical barrier between Dickens' era and our own. Social climbing in nineteenth century England (as demonstrated in the novel),was an impossibility as societal rank came through way of birth right - roughly speaking, one was either a land owner or a rent payer. A wealthy benefactor supporting a poor orphan was fantasy at its best. The ramifications of a 'rags to riches' tale is all the more accepting by a contemporary audience as such stories have grown commonplace in Hollywood. One problem is that Finn's assimilation into New York wealth and success seems a little too casual. Movies such as *Trading Places* and *Brewster's Millions* have prepared a modern audience for stories of immense financial gain through anonymous or unknowing benefactors. Such tales, although already present in novels such as *Great Expectations*, have been recycled to the point of growing formulaic and definitely divorced from their social origins.

The makers of *Great Expectations* chose to place a lesser emphasis on the societal imbalances between Finn and Estella and attempt to almost solely focus on the romantic growth between them. Attempting to place a massive focus on these social implications in today's world is a challenge that is hard to be fulfilled. The quality of the film would have been further jeopordised if it had failed to convincingly deal with this issue. This choice, although a selective deviance from the text, is not an entirely flawed angle for the director to take.

However, it seems that the producers have taken a huge cop-out by staging their interpretation of the novel in the USA. The American setting of the film shows an absence of the particularities of Dickensian society and offers a lazy alternative by setting the film in Florida and New York respectively. The primary reason for doing this is to dodge the ever existing classist hierarchy of England. New York plays the part of London in the film and the snobbery of London life is replaced by the yuppie culture of New York. Although these two cities are readily comparable, the stark contrast that is needed between rural (here replaced by Florida) and urban (New York) is absent. The film does not fully emphasise the large, industrial nature of the big city but offers the audience a more idyllic take on New York. Central Park is made to appear as one of the more beautiful places on earth and, conveniently, the city's more urban qualities are left behind (you also get a very fixed image of New York if you're only shown its upper middle-class).

In an age of cinema and the incessant lure of the dollar that comes with it, Hollywood producers are under pressure to wow the masses with their imaginations (and get rich while doing it). An attempt at producing a film based on Dickens' masterpiece is definitely a project that is worth exploring. But unfortunately the modernisation of this text is something that is to be laughed at. The social implications that form the undercurrent of the entire novel are left flat. Little emphasis was placed on the huge societal imbalance between Finn (Pip) and Estella - or perhaps it was too subtle for the naked eye to notice. To the makers' credit, *Great Expectations* is acceptable as modern, romantic films go.. Unfortunately, as a re-hash of a literary landmark, the film remains void of many facets that made the novel so rewarding. More attention to the novel needs to be made to satisfy literary critics as well as flesh-seeking movie goers.

Great Expectations *is playing at the Faubourg.*

CD REVIEWS CD REVIEWS CD REVIEWS

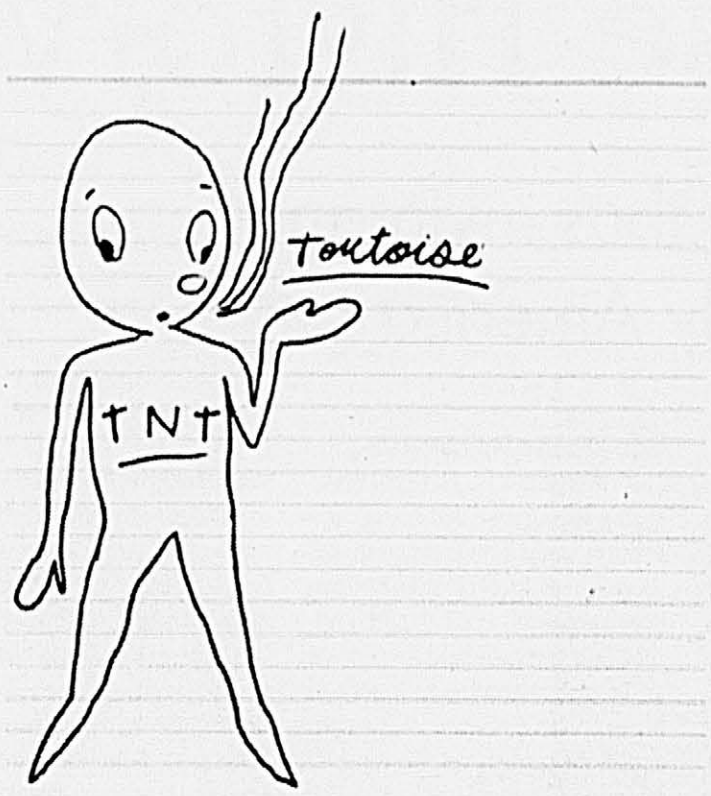
Chocolate Weasel
Spaghettification
Ninja Tune

The Mad scientists are at it again. From Ninja Tune's dark closets comes Chocolate Weasel's debut full-length, "Spaghettification." I'll spare the usual critic rhetoric and tell you flat out: when this album is released on March 30th, buy it!

The concoction is delicious. It's basement-made beat, electro-Afro-funkadellic, hip-hop music. To give an idea of how many styles are on this disk, one need look no further than the liner notes. Influences cited include Einstein, Nirvana, A Tribe Called Quest, Echo & the Bunnymen, Photek, and David Lynch. There are snippets of civil rights rants over fart-noises, chill jazz over cool drum, and out-of-tune notes over a thick, thick bass. If banging on pot's and pans while your kid sister spills cake batter all over the kitchen has a soundtrack, this is it.

What makes this noise appealing is that you can dance to it. The album is not about high-society clubbing or avant-garde envelope-pushing. Throughout the disk, Marc Royal (better known as UK drum'n'bass producer T-Power) and Chris Stephens maintain the immaturity that partying is all about. Before I run out of adjectives, I'll give you the ultimate seal of approval: consider this student writer spaghettified.

- Patrick Moss



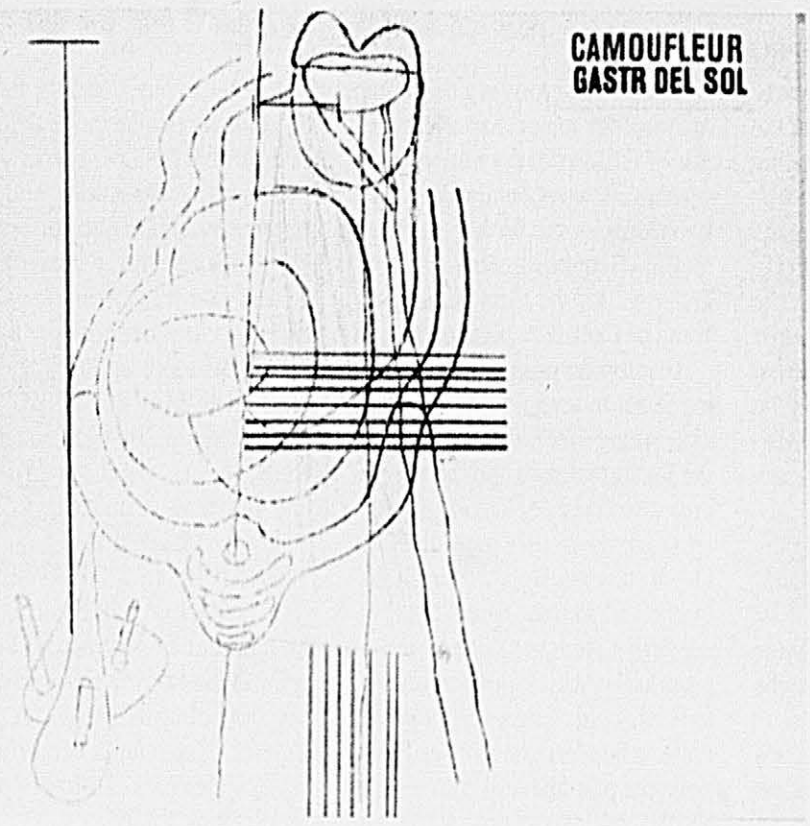
Gastr Del Sol
Camoufleur
(Drag City)

For the past five years, guitarists and sound creators David Grubbs and Jim O'Rourke have been intriguing their listeners with their intricate catalogue of acoustic guitar duels, slow, melodic piano compositions, and bizarre noise sound scapes. On their fourth full-length, Gastr experiment with pop music - the most abstract and wacky style imaginable. Tracks introduced by quirky Eastern-flavoured klezmer music transform into folky guitar-pickings. Yet Gastr's retained the strange recipe of sound experiments: thick drones, bubbling noises, and Grubb's poetic nonsense.

The album begins with "The Seasons Reverse" - a peculiar, upbeat mixture of strumming guitars, quiet electronics, raging horns and marimba percussion. It's like the "The Girl from Ipanema" on crack. On "Each Dream is an Example," you can hear O'Rourke's voice for the first time, as he sings a melodic chorus on top of repeating piano chords.

The two part "Bauchredner" is the high point of *Camoufleur*. The first part is an intricate guitar duel of various motions and speeds which peaks intensely and fades magnificently. The second part is a pop song messed-up in every way, shape, and form. Its bouncing 3-note bass groove and strumming guitars are accented by poppy horns new to both Grubb's or O'Rourke. However phrased, their music is definitely a bold statement.

- Jeremy Rosztain



Tortoise
TNT
(Thrill Jockey)

Tortoise are all fired up and ready to go. The Chicago sextet's third full length flows through the diverse genres of Latin percussion, 1970's minimalism, bass-heavy rock, dub, and experimental electronic music. The first tracks are fine examples of Tortoise's melding these styles in combinations of warm guitar pickings, dubby bass, and rhythmic drumming. Slow, spaghetti western-inspired guitar pickings, droning string instruments and rhythmic mallet banging evoke images of Clint Eastwood bar scenes, while vibraphones, mallets and xylophones lull you to sleep.

However, the most surprising moments can be found on the last four tracks. The band experiments, for the first time, with sounds and rhythms that fit nicely into the expanding genre of electronic music. On "Almost Always," the drums peak with bass-heavy rhythms and an intense array of sound patterns similar to those of Mouse on Mars. On "Jetty", these electronic rhythms bounce even harder and faster than before, accompanied by the glowing sounds of treated guitars. Considering their interest in rhythm and electronics, it's surprising that Tortoise didn't explore these new directions earlier. Now that they have, let's hear it for the leaders of the "post-rock" movement.

- Jeremy Rostzain

John Coltrane
Live at the Village Vanguard Again!
(Impulse)

This, the latest in a long line of live record releases captures Coltrane in his element. Recorded at the famed Village Vanguard jazz club, this album features two standards of the Coltrane repertoire. Digitally remastered and restored, now capture Coltrane's "sheets of sound" flowing seemlessly from the soprano and tenor saxophones which he strived to master. A consummate perfectionist and visionary, Coltrane was at the edge of musical improvisation at the time of these recordings, pioneering the technique of playing several notes in quick succession. However, when playing with the Miles Davis Quintet and Thelonius Monk, Coltrane felt confined. Following the Stockholm shows with Davis in 1961, he broke off on his own to form the John Coltrane Quartet. The track 'Naima' opens with a soft, enveloping sound whose lyricism sets the stage for this short yet potent album. Coltrane shares the stage with Pharoah Sanders, a tenor saxophonist with occasional bursts of brilliance, but whose halting manner leaves the listener craving for Coltrane to return. Also evident are the talents of percussionist Emanuel Rahim, which reach fruition in the initial moments of the second track, 'My Favorite Things'. Jimmy Garrison, one of Coltrane's preferred drummers, accompanies with a flawless beat and driving momentum; not an easy task when dealing with "'trane."

The sound and recording engineers on this release do a masterful job of capturing the concert with an open sound. However, it is the mastery of the various instruments, from saxophone to percussion, which gives the Coltrane fan an idea of how jazz should be played.

- Gabriel Flores

Candidate Profile: Karen Pelley

SSMU VP Internal

By Ben Hardy

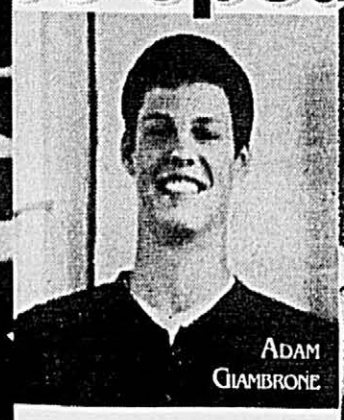
Experience: Pelley has worked with many campus organization, and served as a Coordinator for SSMU Frosh Week and Walksafe. "I have had a lot of experience... which allowed me to work closely with the current VP Internal and to learn about the portfolio."

Goals: Pelley hopes to improve existing student services such as Frosh, and establish new ones such as a permanent used book store, a student constable program to "promote security on campus," and weekend bus shuttle between Montreal and Toronto. She wants to "improve communication between SSMU and the numerous organizations on campus," by forming a leadership conference in the fall, "to meet student leaders, help them define their goals and to find ways to realize them."

Karen Pelley was unable to be interviewed for Keri Kosuri's article profiling the VP Internal race which appeared in Monday's Daily.

CD REVIEWS CD REVIEWS

VP Finance candidates speak their mind



Deciding who will use the black ink

by Lindsay Gray

As another SSMU year dawns, new issues are being placed on the VP Finance's plate. The impending takeover of the McGill Bookstore by Chapters Inc. and cutbacks by the Provincial Government resulting in increased tuition fees have the McGill community clutching their wallets. Duncan Reid - the current VP Finance for SSMU - says that the significance of these issues varies according to the platform of each candidate.

So then - what issues are prominent in the minds of the candidates? Interviews with three of the four candidates reveal the plans of these VP Finance prospects and give the voters some inside information on who will be using the black ink when drawing up the McGill budget for the 1998-99 academic year.

Adam Giambrone is a third year Archaeology major. Experience as AUS VP Finance for a period this past year has allowed Giambrone to gain knowledge of the finance world at McGill. Giambrone also acted as Treasurer for the New Democratic Youth of Canada in past years.

Giambrone proposes restructuring SSMU in several ways. He advocates taking over businesses such as the Shatner cafeteria and the Alley in order to increase SSMU revenues and create employment opportunities for McGill students. He also plans to introduce a Used Bookstore, improve the Copy Centre as a student service provided by McGill, increase funding for Clubs and Services and Special Projects Fund, create an open book policy of past financial data on the SSMU, get the renovations on Shatner underway, make the building more accessible and make better use of the available space.

Giambrone was quick to address concerns over his resignation as AUS VP Finance last year. Following his election last year, he accepted an offer to go to Sudan with the Royal Ontario Museum of Toronto, and has given his word that this will not happen again. In Giambrone's words, he has "been there, done that" and plans to make his role as VP Finance his top priority.

Sarah Glinski, a third year Finance major, has contributed to the Management Undergraduate Society through her involvement in running and doing the budget for parties, events, committees and clubs.

Major elements of Glinski's platform include lobbying to get the Health Plan back which served McGill students a few years ago and re-implementing a Used Book Exchange in order to provide jobs for students and lower the costs of textbooks while channeling a percentage into the SSMU. She also plans to increase funding for the Special Projects Fund. and wants to facilitate student access to financial information and resources.

Lorenzo Pederzani is a fourth year Political Science major who has served as SSMU Clubs Representative to Council, producer and coproducer of the Player Theatre and McGill Drama Festival respectively.

According to Pederzani, "at SSMU, financial responsibility involves finding the right balance between idealism and pragmatism". His platform proposes ways to achieve that balance. He wants to create bursaries for students on the basis of need by channeling profits from SSMU, incorporate a Sadie's in the Upper Residences and increase funding for the Clubs and Services of SSMU. He also proposes closing the Shatner cafeteria and establishing a food court in its place in order to remedy the decreasing sales resulting from customer dissatisfaction.

The fourth candidate, Rich Retyi was unavailable for comment. On the whole, an impressive and dedicated group of individuals are representing the Student's Society of McGill in anticipation. Approaching the year 2000, one of these candidates will create a solid foundation for the SSMU to prosper for the next millennium.

Avoiding False History

Khalid Greggs on the Columbus myth and African Muslims in early America

John Lee

Columbus must have known he wasn't the first. After being passed by African ships sailing in the opposite direction across the Atlantic, he wrote in his diary that some of the people of the New World wore turbans or veils and were black. According to some historians, African Muslim travelers had beaten him to the Americas by hundreds of years. In 889, an African sailed across the Atlantic and back, and in 1312 two thousand ships journeyed from Africa, landed in Venezuala and never returned. The evidence to support this claim comes from African artifacts and cave paintings of elephants found in the United States which predate Columbus' arrival as well as from Islamic documents. Khalid Greggs refered to or hinted at these sources throughout his lecture *Africans in America before Columbus*, a recent contribution to Black History Month presented by the Muslim Students Association of Concordia.

Describing himself not as an historian but a "student of history", Greggs makes the strong case that, although history shapes the way we view the world, it is also a construct that distorts the truth. For him, many of our perceptions are based on false ideas of origins and beginnings, and much historic evidence is selective. A large part of Greggs's agenda is to highlight and dispel these myths. In this lecture he focused on the popular notion that Columbus discovered the New World and shows how this led to ideas of European or Christian superiority in America.

In the most engaging part of his presentation, Greggs claimed that the "intellectual dishonesty" of many historians has created a Eurocentric reading of early America that hides an older African Muslim legacy. He claims that North Africans arrived in the Americas before 1492 and established relationships of respect and mutuality with the people they met in contrast to the dominance and destruction committed by the Europeans. In addition, he suggests that a desire to kill black Muslims led the Conquistadors to pursue a general policy of genocide in the New World. Greggs was at his most persuasive in this lecture when undermining our perceived wisdom of history with these counter examples drawn from a non-European, non-Christian perspective.

This is not a new approach. Howard Zinn and bell hooks have been attacking these myths about America for years. Both discuss the existence of African Muslims in the New World before Columbus. hooks claims in her 1994 book *Outlaw Culture* that "the Columbus legacy provides the cultural capital that underlies and sustains modern-day white supremacist capitalist patriarchy." Both she and Zinn talk of the non-confrontational relationships that were formed between Africans and Native Americans. Along with Greggs, these radical re-readers of history show that there is always an alternative to the evidence that has been presented by historians.

Unfortunately, Greggs make such a strong case that history is a process of myth-making and makes us so suspicious of selective evidence that we become more critical of his own attempts to provide an Islamic re-reading of American history. The weakness of his own argument centers on the issue of evidence. Clearly it is difficult to give anything other than an overview or achieve much depth in a one hour lecture but Greggs's assertion of an early black Muslim presence in America rests so heavily on evidence that perhaps he should have used more specific examples.

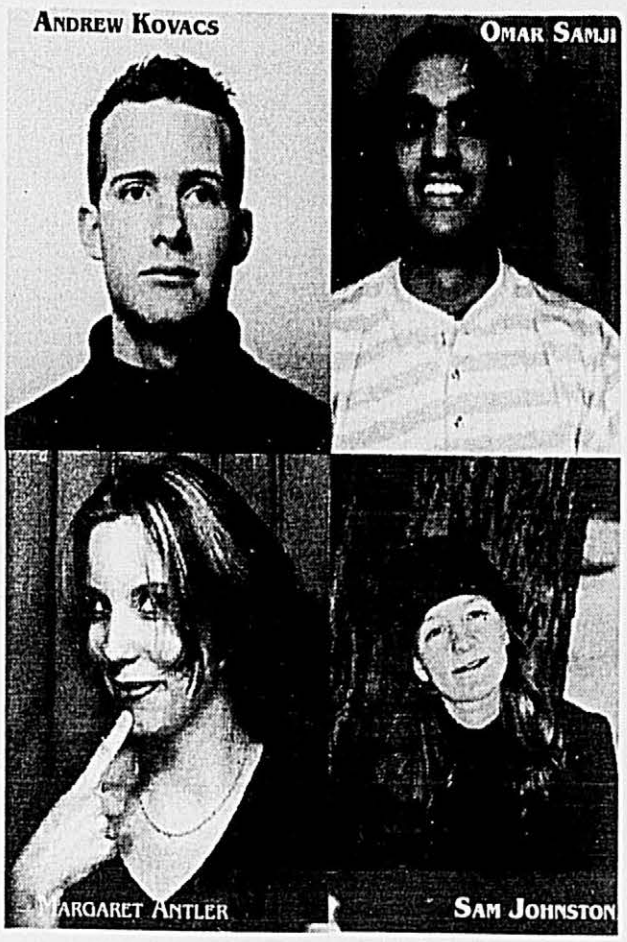
He regularly alluded to ancient African structures and artifacts in America that prove his contentions but wavered when pressed by an audience member to give more details. His task is complicated by the fact that both North African and Native American cultures favour oral over written traditions, but it is hard to understand why more concrete evidence could not have been provided about the thousands of Africans who arrived in 1312, for example. In introducing the issue of selective evidence, yet failing to produce anything convincing to support his own reading of history, Greggs seemed to raise more questions than he could answer.

Despite this, Greggs claimed not to be trying to replace the Columbus myth with an Islamic myth about American history. However, the suspicion was that those of the Islamic faith, who made up most of the audience, would find it easiest to accept his re-reading.

Greggs warned in this lecture that we need to be critical about the myths behind history. His caution that "we should not be so gullible as to take on the manufactured ideas" of others is universal. This was an excellent and thought-provoking contribution to Black History Month that raised important questions about the influence of untrue Eurocentric history on the way we view society.

And the candidates for VP University Affairs are.....

by Tamana Kochar



The position of VP University Affairs is arguably the most important of all the Executive. This interview is an exploration into the importance of the position. Margaret Antler, the Red Herring candidate was unavailable for the interview.

Personal Information and Experience:

Sam Johnston: U3 Arts. Arts Senator, member of APPC

Andrew Kovacs: U1 Biology. Science Senator, member of APPC, FYEIC Chair

Omar Samji: U2 Management. Management Senator, Senate/Board Rep on SSMU, member of Planning and Priorities Subcommittee of Senate and Committee of Student Discipline.

Platform:

Sam Johnston: Increase on campus jobs; restructure programs for under-represented students; implement inexpensive GMATs, MCATs; establish a taskforce to link classroom learning to the outside world; and create book renewal over the internet.

Andrew Kovacs: Create forums discussing McGill's fiscal future and curriculum reform; create public forums on the viability of A+ and 4.3 GPA; design On-line courses, syllabi, and old exams.

Omar Samji: Create new internship programs, make past exams available as a policy; increase student input in university decision making; implement an A+ grading system; and a student run review of the academic code of conduct.

What is your opinion of the A+ grade?

Sam Johnston: It hasn't moved me to do much...it has it's advantages and it's disadvantages.

Andrew Kovacs: After speaking with a lot of students I found that it met with a lot of opposition and if we are to go ahead with it, it should be with the consensus of the student body.

Omar Samji: I am in favour of it...First, students are presently at a disadvantage when applying for graduate schools. Secondly, it bridges the gap between an A, A- and a B+ because it is presently disproportionate in dropping 0.7 in 10 marks and an A+ proportions it out...A's will become more common because it is not the highest possible grade and professors will not be reluctant to give A's.

What is your opinion of the Arts multi-track program?

Sam Johnston: As the Arts Senator it is of particular concern to me. It is good to give the students so many options. In Arts bulleted courses are of concern and I believe that's in the course calendar should be what they get every year and not every three years.

Andrew Kovacs: It allows for a truly liberal Arts education. One concern is that the approval has been rushed to get it into the course calendar for next year and there might be some problems.

Omar Samji: It is a step in the right direction. It lends itself well to combining with internships and that is (something) that is long overdue in the Faculty of Arts and is something the university always needs to do.

What do you think are issues of concern for SSMU as a Council?

Sam Johnston: To foster student initiative and leadership into a creative energy.

Andrew Kovacs: Solidarity, accountability and awareness- getting students aware of what we do with our $3 million budget.

Omar Samji: Concentration of power- there shouldn't be as much power concentrated in the 5 executives. The Councilors themselves should be expected to play a very prominent role not only by bringing their faculty's interest into council but (in the interest of) as a university as a whole.

In your opinion what are the positive and negative aspects of the performance of this year's VP University Affairs- Elizabeth Gomery.

Sam Johnston: If there is one VP UA that I would want to model myself after it would be Lisa Gruschow (1995-96). She did a tremendous amount of good work and she did it totally selflessly.

Andrew Kovacs: Her positive characteristics are her ability to articulate students views in a forceful but not threatening manner to the administration and the respect that comes with that. On the negative side, I don't think that enough emphasis was put on equity issues and not a lot of initiative was taken.

Omar Samji: She is very friendly and passionate about equity issues and very accommodating with regards to our Senate subcommittee and helpful when Senators had questions under UA to get the background. One negative was that the Senate Board/Caucus was ineffectively run. She was the Chair and the meetings started late, they were too short and didn't create a cohesive group of student Senators support and as a result there was less student input at Senate.

Seeing as three out of the four candidates running this year are Senators, what do you think sets you apart?

Sam Johnston: My gift is my initiative. I am very vocal and my experience being on Committees and Senate and I take the initiative to bring ideas to reality.

Andrew Kovacs: My grasp of the issues and their importance to students. My openness to all points of view and my science instilled work ethics and desire to do the appropriate research to get to the bottom of the issue and at the same time be very approachable.

Omar Samji: Being the best candidate for VP University Affairs is not based on how many committees you have sat on, how many people you know or how well you know the SSMU system. Its about choosing to pursue specific issues and goals which are important to students no matter how dirty you have to get your hands, no matter how difficult it may be. I think what differentiates myself is that over the past year being on Senate and SSMU, I have taken the opportunity to try and see the university from the point of view of people different from myself.

Exercise your right to vote on March 10, 11 and 12.

McGill

Associate Vice-Principal (Research)

Applications and nominations are invited for the position of Associate Vice-Principal (Research). The Associate Vice-Principal (Research) is responsible to the Vice-Principal (Research) and Dean of Graduate Studies and Research and, together with the Vice-Principal is involved in the overall administration of research at the University. The Associate Vice-Principal (Research) is responsible for the effective administration of the Research Grants Office, the Office of Technology Transfer; and the Office of International Research. Other responsibilities include coordination of Centres, scholarly awards activities, and developing and implementing policies in research-related areas such as research ethics.

Candidates should have a strong research record, have demonstrated administrative abilities, and should he able to communicate effectively in both French and English. On average, the position requires a commitment of four days per week. Candidates will be expected to maintain an active research program and to continue to participate in the academic life of their Department.

Letters of nomination or application accompanied by a curriculum vitae and the names of three referees should be submitted to:

Pierre R. Bélanger
Vice-Principal (Research) and Dean,
Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
Dawson Hall, McGill University
853 Sherbrooke St. West
Montreal, QC H3A 2T5

Deadline: Friday, March 13, 1998

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Information Session

Date: **Tuesday, March 10, 1998**
Time: **5:30 p.m.**
Place: **1550 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West**
Room: **GM 300-24**

RSVP or for more information:

Tel: (514) **848-4149** Fax: (514) **848-4593**
Email: **phdmsc@concordia.ca**

Light refreshments will be served.

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PGSS ELECTIONS 1998

PGSS

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UNCONTESTED CANDIDATES

BRYAN CHUNG,
Executive Chairperson

I am a first year Masters student in the School of Physical and Occupational Therapy. This past year, I served as the P/OT councillor to the PGSS and the PGSS representative to a few committees- both internal and external to PGSS. I have used up my 50 words. Please vote.

HARUNUR RASHID,
External and Government Relations Coordinator

STEVE COHEN,
University and Academic Affairs Coordinator

Hello! I am the candidate for the position of University and Academic Affairs.
I am a first year Masters student in Medical Anthropology, acting as the Masters Senator representative to Council.
I look forward to meeting you at the next PGSS All General Meeting of on March 4th at Thompson House, 6:30pm.

GEORGE CHAN,
Internal Affairs Coordinator

Upon taking office as the internal affairs coordinator, the first event which I brought to the students was the "007 Martini Night". The party was a large success thanks in large part to the graduate students who attended. In total, over 900 people came; over $2500 was raised for the charity and everybody had a great time. What this party showed was that graduate students will party if they are given something worth partying for. With this in mind, I hope to bring more parties and social activities to the graduate students since this is exactly what they want and deserve.

SAAD KHAN,
Senator (Masters)

An MBA student, I have served as PGSS Senator and Councilor.

Achievements :
- Moved to increase PGSS representation on the Board-of-Governors.
- Opposed tuition-fee increases.
- Sought industrial partnership for increased job opportunities and funding..

I will further promote these issues. Vote Saad Khan for YOUR PGSS Masters Senator.

STEPHEN DÉRY,
Senator (Doctoral)

Support Stephen Déry, a student in the Department of Atmospheric and Oceanic Sciences, as your Ph.D. Senator. He is very dedicated to student groups such as PGSS, LBGTM, QGC, AOSSS among others. He will do his outmost best to represent all Ph.D. students in McGill's Senate. Thank You.

CONTESTED CANDIDATES

DAMIAN WHEELER,
Finance Coordinator

Thomson House is currently losing Graduate Student money normally spent on services and political representation, causing a financial crisis for PGSS. I will develop policies ensuring the long-term financial well-being of PGSS and with the Internal Affairs Coordinator will also increase business through promotion and parties (eg. "007 Martini Night").

LEANNA ZOZULA,
Finance Coordinator

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Board of Governors Representative

My main objective as Board of Governors representative is to increase funding for McGill by encouraging other members to lobby for an increase in federal funding for education and by supporting a modest increase in the provincial tuition cap to levels comparable to other major universities in the country.

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As PGSS representative to Board-of-Governors I will ensure:
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Board of Governors Representative

As far as is known I am the most qualified person ever to be a candidate for Board of Governors because of my knowledge of McGill and my political experiences. I have been at McGill over 10 years as a graduate and undergraduate and known it concerns intimately. I have been President and Vice President of McGill's Students Society and a political candidate municipally, provincially, and federally.

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The Women's Networking Group and its activities are open to all McGill women. We encourage those interested to become paid members of the group at an annual cost of $15 ($5 for students). For a membership form please contact Debra Blanch at 398-3995, dblanch@fgsr.lan.mcgill.ca.

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Comment

Collectivizing Ourselves

Solidarity within the women's movement

by Verda Cook, Jessica Lim and Amy Papaelias

"The opposite of patriarchy is not matriarchy but solidarity."

This is graffitied in yellow spray paint on the back wall of the Daily office. As we sat down at our first Women's Issue meeting, the slogan seemed inescapable.

Solidarity, however, seems ill-fitted for a description of the modern women's movement. Somewhere within the discord between the conservative feminists and the dissenting voices of radical women, solidarity is erased. It got lost between Black women and white women; it made a wrong turn and got fragmented into different struggles. Yet at the same time, solidarity is exactly what is needed.

Obviously, solidarity may be simply a utopian theory as there are many dividing routes which can be taken. For some, the path of radical feminism is the only satiating option. For other women, a traditional lifestyle seems most rewarding.

In this issue alone, there are more than a few contrasting opinions. While conservative feminists are invited to join in the movement (see Ilana Ron's *No Left Turn?* pg. 15) many of them support constructs which silence women's expressions heard through Queer Erotica (see Keri Kosuri's *Pornography Laws* pg. 10). Further, some women believe that the onus is on every woman to play an active role in furthering the woman's movement while many choose to abstain from it.

Is it possible to reconcile these differences? It would be unrealistic to believe that a movement could be void of contrarieties. Yet regardless of friction, it is imperative that women are not only tolerant of other women but respectful of each other's decisions.

All movements are prey to fragmentation, and the woman's movement is no exception. Given that women occupy over 50% of the population, divisiveness seems inevitable. Differences based on class, nationality, religion, race, sexual preferences, ideologies and experiences often overshadow the commonalties and the essential goal of women's empowerment.

The problem is further aggravated by the historic pattern of denying women the ability to find cohesiveness both physically and psychologically. Women commonly struggle with more commitment for their 'other' identities. Revolutionary women have died for equality and liberation often while negating their gender struggle. Black women boarded buses for civil rights only to be later denied just that by their brothers in struggle. While Queer women fight for gay rights, the Queer community is still often a patriarchal environment.

Further, women, especially in North America, have been breast fed *Similac* fantasies of a dreamy dependency on Prince Charming. The survival of women has been consciously constructed on the whims of men. And therefore we have learned to fight tooth and 'nails' for men. We have been socialized to view our sisters as competitors and enemies.

The women's movement has not yet escaped its own psychological oppression. What has ensued is a plethora of different factions working at furthering their own causes while suspiciously eyeing the tactics and principles of 'other' factions. Often, feminists have even been guilty of marginalising other women in the interest of their own agenda.

The tendency to distrust as well as mistreat each other must be eradicated.

Women's liberation will come through education. Not education defined and measured through university courses and library textbooks, but through increased communication and positive interaction among the plurality that we are. Knowledge (and ac-knowledge-ment) empowers both fundamentally and practically. Without it understanding each other is a distant future.

What is in actuality 'utopian' is the belief that women can come together with one vision in perfect unison.

What is 'realistic' and what we aim for in this issue is a collectivity with the strength of a common purpose. And, with an acknowledgment of our differences, perhaps we can find strength in the plurality of experiences which we bring to this table.

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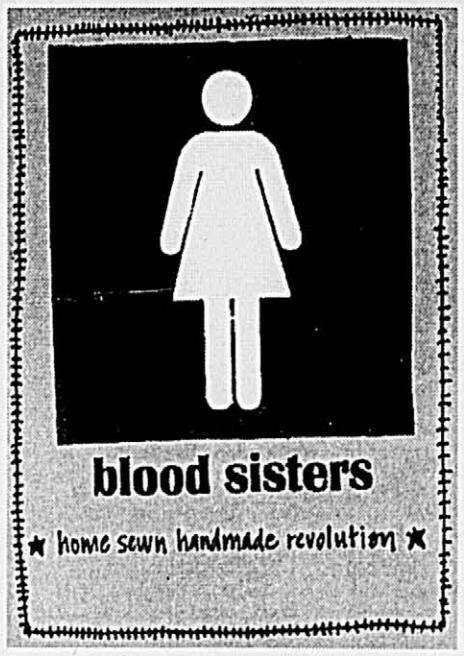
Unbleaching Our Bodies

Alternative Women's Products



by Ali Engel

Once upon a time there was a doctor named Earle Cleveland Haas. He was "a general practitioner, a courtly man who wore a white shirt every day... Haas spent much of his spare time developing the tampon. His inspiration came not from knowledge of the homemade tampons used by women since antiquity, but instead from observations of the discomfort of his wife and of his female patients who wore bulky external pads."

-from the Tampax Inc. Website

Dr. Earle Cleveland Haas - the founder of Tampax Inc., an organization that was to save women from the discomfort and distaste of monthly menstruation. While the website acknowledges that the origins of tampon-use go back as far as ancient Egypt and Greece, it is clear that the widespread production and consumption of disposable tampons is a twentieth century, Western phenomenon. According to the 1986 Consumer Reports magazine's survey, disposable tampons became one of the "the small wonders and big deals that revolutionized the lives of consumers." Women were sold on the idea of having bulky, smelly, diaper-like pads replaced with small, soft, spanking-white, flushable tampons and the industry was a success.

Women today are increasingly recognizing, however, that this 'small wonder' is not quite as wonderful as it has been marketed to be. With their hidden health risks, implicit negative body messages, and unnecessary environmental waste, disposable tampons, other widespread feminine 'hygiene' products and the companies that market them are being challenged by feminist groups and health educators, and alternatives for women are being created.

Environmental and health risks

Tampons and pads are overpackaged - just think, for example, of one *Always* maxi pad with it's pink and green plastic and wax paper packaging, and imagine it multiplied 10, 000 times for each pad-wearing woman on the earth. *Blood Sisters*, a menstrual health movement based as a working group of QPIRG-Concordia, suggests that each woman uses about 10,000 tampons or pads in her lifetime, contributing to our already overfull landfill sites. While this waste factor may be an obvious downside to tampons and other feminine products, there are 'hidden' health risks associated with tampons that are affecting an increasing number of menstruating women.

Have you ever noticed that both tampons and pads are made of sparkling, bright white material? The whiteness is the result of the chlorine bleaching process that is used by all major tampon producers (Tampax, Playtex, o.b.) and most manufacturers of pads. Ironically, while the material is being bleached 'whiter than white' to exploit society's association of white with sterile and clean, it is precisely this chlorine bleaching process that is a major cause of the health problems associated with feminine hygiene products. Terra Femme, an organization that manufactures tampons made of chlorine-free, medical grade cotton, explains that chlorine binds to organic matter producing organochlorines Organochlorines are unnatural, stable chemicals that can negatively impact an individual's reproductive and immune systems, and can cause damage to the skin, the liver and the kidneys. While each person has their own level at which the build-up of organochlorines becomes critical, chlorine-bleached pads and tampons lead to an unnecessary increase in any woman's exposure to these chemicals.

In addition, each box of tampons contains in it a little pamphlet warning users about the risks of toxic shock syndrome (TSS). TSS is a rare but potentially fatal disease caused by a strain of bacteria toxin known as TSST-1. TSST-1 grows rapidly on rayon, a material found in all major brands of chlorine-bleached tampons. This bacteria toxin has been found almost exclusively in the vaginas of women who use tampons. Both the American Society for Microbiology Journal and the Journal of Infectious Diseases have published articles stating that rayon is an ideal environment for the growth of this bacteria. Further, while the symptoms may include a sudden onset of high fever, vomiting and diarrhea, dizziness and fainting, a sunburn-like rash on the palms of the hands and the soles of the feet, headaches, sore throat, bloodshot eyes, falling blood pressure, or death, doctors will not record a case of TSS unless all the symptoms are present or unless a death results. TSS and the negative effects of tampons are thus vastly under reported, with records accounting for only the most severe cases of shock. While US estimates suggest that there are 1-17 cases of TSS per 100,000 women; it is essential to remember that these statistics reflect only one extreme. Finally, in addition to absorbing menstrual blood, rayon can also absorb other vaginal secretions, causing dryness and ulceration of vaginal tissues.

The various health risks associated with inserting rayon and chlorine into our bodies are being recognized by groups like Blood Sisters, Terra Femme, and the WEED foundation, and are forcing women to reevaluate their choices for feminine protection and further, to question largely accepted societal attitudes surrounding menstruation.

Toxic in chemicals and toxic in ideologies

If chlorine is so bad for our bodies, why are tampons being bleached whiter than white? What assumptions are implicit in the use of disposable menstrual products? a.d., the founder of *Blood Sisters*, says that the companies who market these products continue to "promote a disembodied self. The concepts of hiding and taboo are apparent through their ads which are there to convince us to purchase more of their products." Pictures advertising maxi pads stained with a pale blue watery substance instead of blood, or scenes showing young girls experiencing embarrassment and shame surrounding their periods are common in magazines and on television. a.d. says that these ad campaigns support the idea that "your body is something to be trashed. Disposable culture wants you to trash your body - tampons are meant to be both concealing and disposable, (reinforcing the idea that) your period should be a hated experience." As long as this negative experience reoccurs, these products will be necessary to 'help' women deal with this monthly burden. With applicators and products that are instantly thrown into the garbage, women are discouraged from exploring their bodies and further, are internalizing the idea that their period and vagina are disgusting and should be handled with as little contact and as quickly as possible. a.d., however, feels that "it is important for women to go inside themselves and to explore themselves."

Promoting this positive body message is one of the goals of *Blood Sisters* whose mandate is to "fuel action to combat the silence surrounding our female bodies and to raise awareness surrounding menstrual girl-body politics."

Further, the association of whiteness with sterility and purity is a false, old association that, in fact, has no bearing on reality. Pads and tampons are not sterile. Kristi Boyer, a Peer Health Educator at McGill Student Services explains that "the false association of white with sterility causes many women to conclude that the white products are the safest and cleanest way possible to protect themselves. There is an idea that these products are more technologically advanced than re-usables, but, in fact, the re-usable products may be a healthier and more sanitary choice for our bodies." There is no reason to use pristine white materials which only reinforce medicalized concepts of our periods. As an alternative, there are female products which encourage a positive, healthy body concept.

Body positive alternatives

There are a variety of alternative feminine care products available at cost from the McGill Women's Union and from *Blood Sisters* that are helping to encourage women to reclaim their bodies and their periods. The Keeper is a natural gum rubber cup receptacle that is worn internally during menstruation. When it is full, the cup is simply removed, emptied, wiped off, then reinserted and it is good for up to 10 years. With an average monthly cost of approximately 40 cents, the product is both economically and environmentally friendly. Further, because the Keeper does not absorb your blood and does not contain chlorine or rayon, the product is a healthy choice. a.d. notes that most women misperceive how much they bleed, saying that the Keeper "gives you a different sense of how much you bleed. The blood becomes beautiful rather than disgusting." One McGill student, Gillian Kolla, in fact commented that she loves her Keeper and that she thinks that the Keeper is the best thing that has ever happened for her body and her period.

Another alternative for women who prefer pads, reusable pads with funky, sexy patterns promoting this positive-period philosophy are an option. As a.d. contends, a pad does not need to be a "sterile, white boring thing. It can be fun." She also adds that the blood water left from rinsing out the pads can be used to water your plants.

For Blood Sisters menstruation is a beginning point of discussion for feminist organizing. Their initiatives and products support small women artisans, helping to develop a hand made politic and a localized economy with the goal of making people more aware of supportive, conscious consumerism. So it is clear, then, that Dr. Earle Cleveland Haas and his products are not the wonders they were once thought to be. It turns out that women do not need to be rescued from the distaste and discomfort of menstruation, but are now reattaching their own meanings to this natural female experience.

Blood Sisters can be reached at 514 - 848-7585 at Concordia QPIRG

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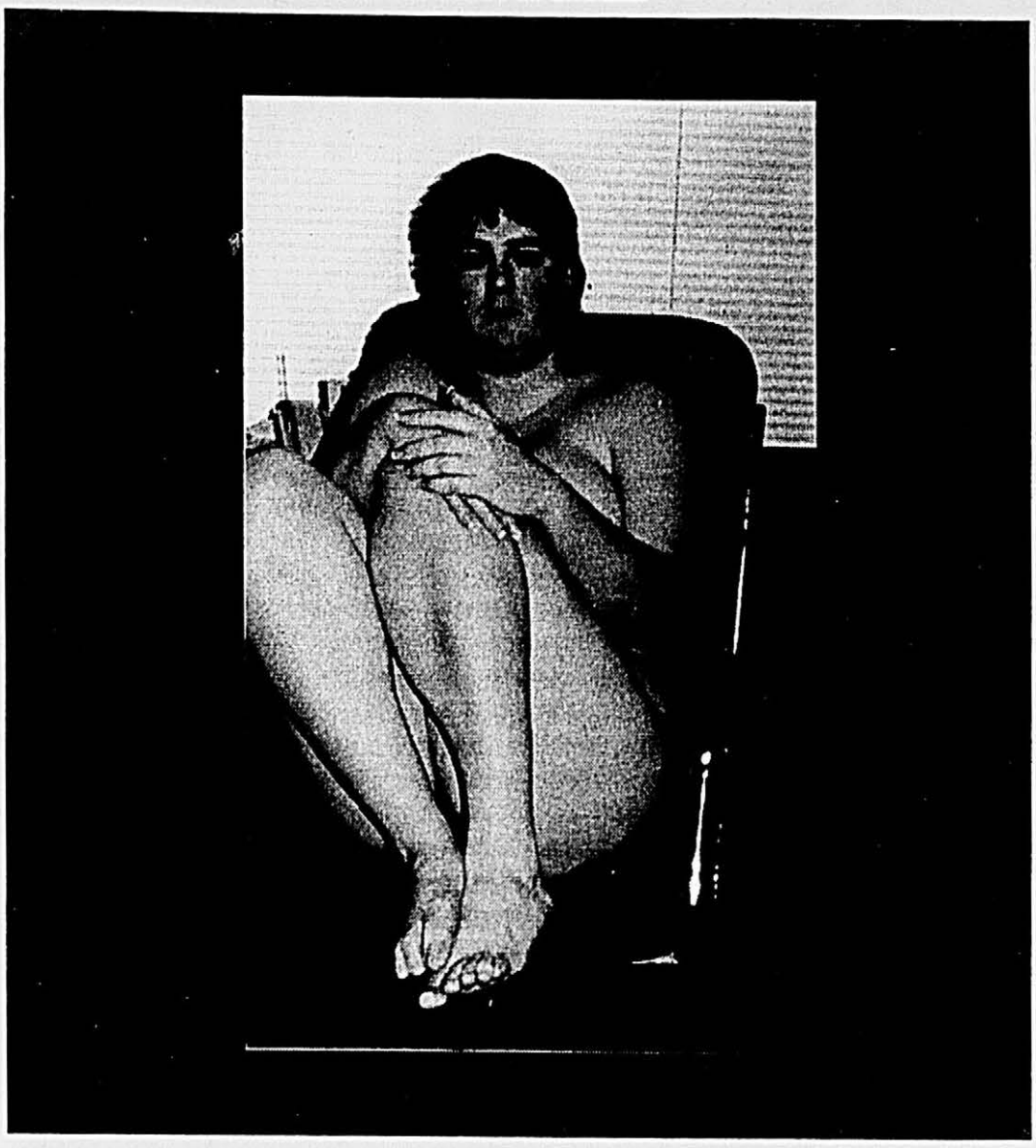
Tara Newell at ease in her office in Shatner



Opening Up

More than just a firm handshake

by Tara Newell

"Employers did not simply develop the beauty backlash because they wanted office decoration. It evolved out of fear. That fear, from the point of view of the power structure, is firmly grounded. The beauty backlash is indeed absolutely necessary for the power structure's survival."
- From Naomi Wolf's The Beauty Myth

I wish that I had the power to magically enlighten all those women who still do not understand the impact gender has on women's position in society. I am deeply frustrated and utterly confused when I hear any woman say, "I'm not a feminist." For me, part of what it means to be a feminist is understanding that it is wrong when I get a squeeze on the shoulder instead of a handshake, or when acknowledged with a handshake, I receive a comment like, "You have a strong grip, for a woman." As a political leader, I experience this behaviour on a daily basis. Perhaps the individuals who deny my equality do not think that I am entitled to a high profile position. But I am. One should not have to look like a model in a magazine to be given a highly visible role in society. As women, we have a right to these positions. To be in politics, to be a vocal representative, or to be a respected leader.

I have confidence in my ability to be an effective President. I have been enlightened, and understand that your appearence need not affect your abilities, and your gender need not determine your role. Be comfortable in your body, have confidence in who you are, and never be afraid to offer a firm handshake.

QPIRG

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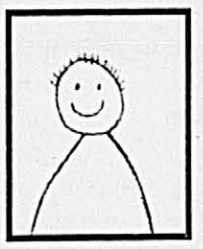
The following candidates have been acclaimed to the QPIRG Board of Directors. The Board is the ultimate decision-making body at QPIRG. They set policy, select working groups, hire and supervise staff, and are responsible for the budget. There are two posisitons still vacant on the Board. As per QPIRG's constitution, the new Board can appoint people to fill these vacancies. Anyone is intersted in joining the new Board should call QPIRG at 398-7432.

Rebeka Breder

Jennifer Besner

no picture available
Ellen S. Hong

Ashley Lebner


Katy Mamen

Uri Pizzaro

Michael Watson

Annual General Meeting

At this meeting, the Board will present its financial statements and annual report for the previous year. Following this, there will be a discussion on QPIRG's activities this past year. Working group volunteers, participants in QPIRG's internship program, and any other interested people are invited to take part in this discussion, and suggest improvements for next year. This will also be an opportunity to meet the members of the new Board. For more information, please call us at 398-7432.

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The Marginal Heroine

Rediscovering powerful women in the outskirts of religion

by Andrea Unikowsky

Feminism. Patriarchy. Hermeneutics. These buzz words swirl in the air of the McGill Religion department, creating a fine mist that I breathe each day and now ardently courses through my veins. Feminists strive to "demistify" the subtle effects of patriarchy by examining the androcentric perspective from which religious texts have been created and religious doctrines have been taught. In her course entitled *Women and Christianity*, Professor Roberts Skerrett demonstrates how androcentric perspectives have pushed women to a marginal social position. In order to discover women's points of view we must shift to the outskirts of the androcentric perspective. Here we discover how women have been subjugated in patriarchal society, and how women have sought empowerment within and despite that subjugation. One method feminists employ is hermeneutics, which explicitly analyzes the relationship between text and reader. Feminist hermeneutics attempts to lift the fog from apparently misogynistic texts by distinguishing between the reader's interpretation and the text itself, or by reinterpreting a sexist text from a new perspective. Skerrett's as well as Adella Sandness' course entitled *Images of the Feminine in Hinduism and Buddhism* teaches that amidst the misogyny in religion, feminists are uncovering spiritual female figures that may be employed to empower women.

Feminists who study religion follow tracks into the past and return with female figures who have been chap-eroned off the androcentric train of history. Our first stop is the second century AD, where we encounter the Christian heroine named Thecla. We discover her in an extra-canonical work known as *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, which stands outside authoritative scripture, but which may have been included within some canons until the fourth century. After listening to Paul preach, Thecla wants to dedicate her life solely to G-d, and to renounce marriage and childbirth in the process. Paul is jailed for influencing young virgins (!), and Thecla valiantly rescues him. Her own mother is infuriated by her devotion to Paul and her refusal to marry, crying: "burn the lawless one!" G-d protects her from the flame and she flees. As a refugee she faces a powerful man named Alexander. Thecla grabbed him and ripped his cloak, took the crown off his head and made him a laughing stock, and is sentenced to death by being trapped with wild animals. But once again, she is saved by G-d.

Whether this incredible story is a legend or based on historical fact, she is a wonderfully strong and determined figure for Christian women.

We now travel to India, where we will focus on a controversial figure for feminists, named Sita. This Goddess is the ideal wife of Rama. She unrelentingly fulfills her duties to her husband. Initially, feminists may flinch from the story- her husband must go into exile for fourteen years so he may consequently inherit the throne, and despite her wishes he leaves her behind, assuming she could not handle life in the forest. She is devastated, lamenting that only her husband gives meaning to her life. Like Thecla, Sita faces incredible trials, such as her abduction by a demon and her desire to die rather than marry him. Hanumen arrives to save her but she refuses to touch a man other than her husband, the honor of rescuing her must be given only to her husband. Eventually Rama defeats the demon but will not take Sita back after another man has controlled her for so long. Because she displeased Rama she attempts suicide by burning herself, but similarly to Thecla, the God of fire refuses to burn her. Some feminists consider Sita a pathetic victim of patriarchy, but others respect her due to the power she has developed through her sacrifices. Hindu women who steadfastly fulfill their duty are said to develop a tremendous inner heat, *shakti*, which in fact gave Sita the power to burn the demon had she chosen to. Through each act of devotion, the Hindu woman may tap into a deeper layer of sacrificial strength, and thus discover the boundless creative energy that lies inside her. Some Hindu women also interpret Sita's story as metaphorical of a relationship between the devoted worshipper and G-d, represented by Sita and Rama respectively.

Thecla and Sita are two examples among an array of empowered female figures in religion. Both women remain devoted to G-d despite their trials of faith. Each are rejected by the men to whom they are dedicated: At one point Thecla asks to follow Paul on his journeys, but he replies that "the times are horrible and you are beautiful. May no other temptation come upon you...and you not bear up but act as cowardice." He believes that she will succumb to temptation just as Rama accuses Sita of having been unfaithful: "Assuredly Ravana, beholding thy ravishing and celestial beauty, will not have respected thy person during the time thou didst dwell in his abode". In both cases beauty is connected to unfaithfulness. Feminists consider this part of a common motif in which men project their desires onto women, transforming them into weak and lustful creatures, or powerful and seductive women of whom men are the victims. These degrading images of women have been constructed through an androcentric perspective. By rediscovering and reexamining female religious figures, women can reclaim power and spirituality within their religions.

We've Come A Long Way, Baby

History of the McGill Women's Union

by Jessica Mann

The earliest known reference to the Women's Union is in a 1919 issue of the McGill News, which describes its formation at the beginning of World War I, "at the suggestion of Mrs. Walter" to help with the war effort. The article describes women raising money, knitting garments and preparing sphagnum dressings for the war effort. However, the Women's Union is generally considered to have started some fifteen-odd years after this article suggests.

Since women were excluded from the McGill Students' Society when it was founded in 1908, several alternative organizations were formed. In 1931, these organizations were superseded by the Women's Union (then known as the Women Students' Union) and by 1932 all women's societies and clubs were placed under its jurisdiction. Over the next two decades, the Women's Union coordinated such services as a non-profit second-hand bookstore, and the two hours of voluntary war service work required of women students at McGill in World War II. Aside from this, the Women's Union primarily organized social functions. Among them were teas, buffet dinners and fashion shows "modeled by McGill girls." By the 1960s, however, interest and activity at the Women's Union had dwindled. Given that separation of the sexes on campus was outmoded, the Union was dissolved in 1969. The Daily at the time quipped, "the casualties of the death of the Women's Union would be the Freshette reception and the annual book exchange."

An Idea Reborn

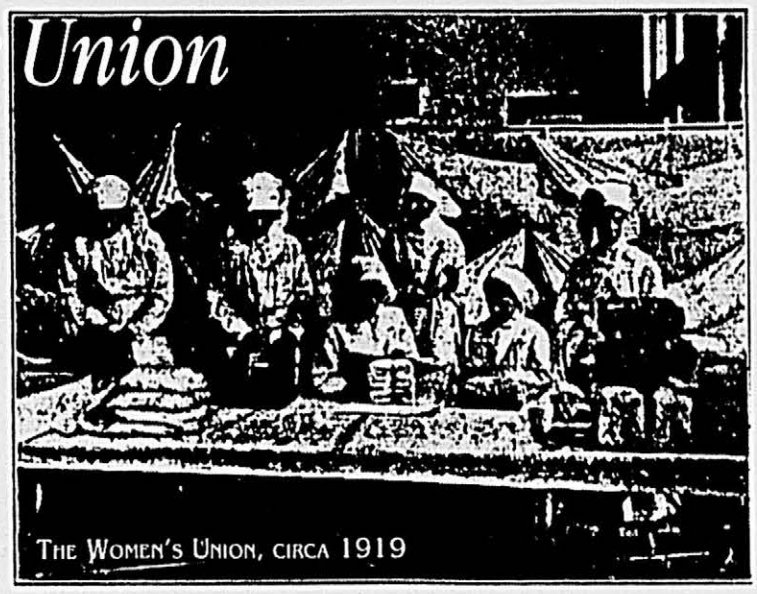
In 1972, students Susan Gottheil and Bascia Hellwig, realizing that the hoped-for equality of the sexes had never materialized, re-opened the Women's Union. Thanks to a bureaucratic oversight, the organization had never been dropped from Students' Society constitution, thus guaranteeing it a budget. Nonetheless, Gotheil said in a 1975 interview that it was "quite a fight getting money," and more than fifty women ended up joining a sit-in to convince Student Council to increase its allotment for the ambitious new group.

They scored a coup with their new space, which the Women's Union has occupied ever since in its ongoing role as drop-in center. An article in the summer 1975 issue of the McGill News describes it as "large and comfortable, with couches, bookshelves stocked with titles by and about women, and invariably coffee."

Along with its new location, the Women's Union re-opened with a new name and new, feminist, mandate. The center was named after Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and featured a resource center, library and comfortable space where consciousness-raising groups and informal noon-time discussions took place. Since then, the Women's Union can claim an illustrious list of accomplishments, from bringing in speakers such as Sisie Bright and Rebecca Walker, to publishing the "womanist/feminist journal" Heridan and the 1994 Girl Guide, to participating in the early stages of a number of now-well-established initiatives, including the Women's Studies programme, Walksafe, and the Sexual Assault Center of McGill Student's Society.

An Under-used Resource

Officially, every one of McGill's 17,000-odd female undergraduate students is a member of the Women's Union. One might think that a place which sells cheap birth control, has a library and offers a kitchen and comfy ambiance, complete with plants and a couch, would be overrun with people. Actually, it remains a fairly undiscovered oasis.



THE WOMEN'S UNION, CIRCA 1919

Sasha Crittenden, External Coordinator for the Women's Union, explains that poor location, infrequent hours and lack of awareness are probably responsible. "The space is wonderful, and we offer useful services. But being in the back corner of the fourth floor, it's hard to find and get to. It's really too bad."

Lack of awareness is a pervasive issue. "We suspect that most women at McGill don't know that this space exists. So tell your friends," she says with a laugh. "And sometimes, even if people do know, they don't want to come in because they're afraid they won't be welcome." Many women imagine it as a place where they might be derided for not being "feminist enough." This, Sasha stresses, is simply not true. "We're here to offer services to women, not to convert people to a particular kind of feminism. [The staffers and co-ordinators] all have an incredible variety of ideological beliefs, and our different projects reflect that." She adds that, while it is a women-only space, and men are asked to respect that, they are always welcome to buy birth control, use the library or ask questions.

Any final comments, I ask? "It's a wonderful space that is here for women to use. Come and take advantage of us — we're here for you."

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No One's Little Sister

by Keri Kosuri

Tired of her fast-paced life in Toronto, Janine Fuller moved to Vancouver in 1989, and found a job at a local bookstore, hoping to relax. She never expected to find herself on the front lines of a war against state censorship laws.

She soon discovered, however, that Canada Customs officials had been routinely seizing Little Sister's shipments of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered literature since 1985.

That was over ten years ago.

In 1994, fed up with challenging each seizure on a case-by-case basis, Little Sister's took Canada Customs to court.

The bookstore argued that customs officials have too much power to detain materials they deem obscene at the border — and lost.

Now, almost three years after the ruling came down, Little Sister's appeal is finally going to be heard. In two weeks, the Vancouver-based bookstore, in conjunction with the BC Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA), will once again get its day in court, this time in BC's Court of Appeal.

The bookstore will again argue that it is inappropriate for customs officers to possess the authority to determine what is obscene and what should be denied entrance into Canada.

"It is intolerable to consider a customs officer having the power to tell people what they can or cannot read. It is not right to have the bureaucrats making such decisions and we must fight the legislation behind this. It's the only choice you have," Fuller explains.

Such legislation is especially dangerous because, as Fuller points out, it can become a weapon of discrimination in the hands of homophobic customs officers who target gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered bookstores and publications.

"These materials are largely politic, they are about what we are, how we want to organize our society," argues Mane Mollard, policy director of BCCLA, "and citizens should have unfettered access to all materials."

What's obscene?

According to Tariff Code 9899.00 of the List of Tariff Provisions to the Customs Tariff, Canada Customs has the power to restrict importation of "Books, printed paper, drawings, paintings, prints, photographs, or representations of any kind that a) are deemed to be obscene under subsection 163(8) of the Criminal Code..."

The subsection in question defines a publication as "obscene" if "its dominant characteristic is "the undue exploitation of sex, or of sex and any one or more of the following subjects, namely crime, horror, cruelty and violence."

According to a 1992 Supreme Court of Canada decision, "undue exploitation" primarily pertains to sexual expressions that are violent and treat their subjects in degrading and dehumanizing ways.

This definition has been backed by many anti-porn activists as essential to stemming the flow of pornography propagating violence against women. Unfortunately, the tariff regulations have been used more widely to justify the seizure of queer literature, and other voices that challenge the status quo, than to halt the distribution of violent and degrading materials.

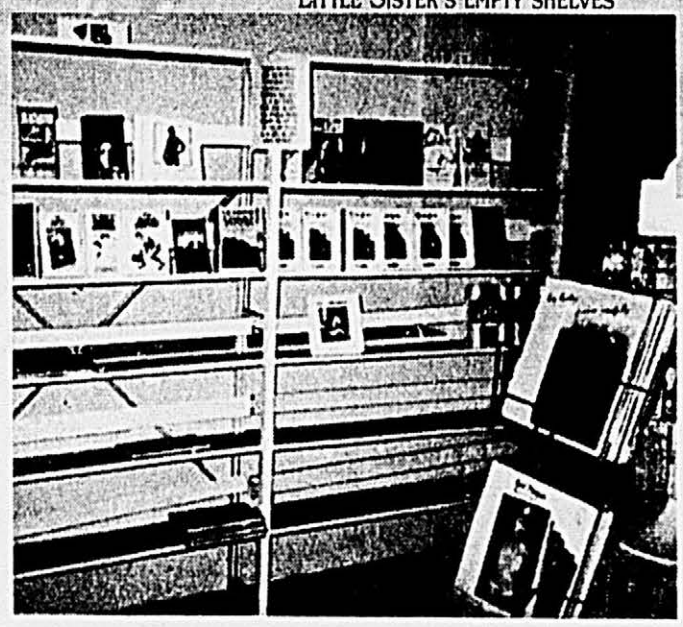
Offending "community standards"

In defining "undue exploitation of sex," the Tariff Code implicitly promotes the norms established by the status quo.

"The exploitation of sex is 'undue' when the sexually explicit sections of the material fail the 'community standard of tolerance test.'" The community standard, however, is not defined.

The Tariff Code does state, though — in bold no less — that, "This is not a test of whether given material may be morally offensive to some people, but rather whether public opinion would perceive the material to be harmful to society."

LITTLE SISTER'S EMPTY SHELVES



Stuart Blackley, co-authored *Restricted Entry*, which details the Little Sister's trial, with Janine Fuller. He says it's clear that the present regulations sanction seizing anything that doesn't conform to the Canadian "norms" of mainstream behaviour.

"Who is to decide what is obscene?" he asks. "Does that mean that even if it's consensual, because this doesn't fit into your community standards that it runs the risk of being seized?"

Blackley says queer literature is seen as subversive, threatening the traditional family unit of Canadian society. He maintains that Canada Customs' repeated seizures of materials destined for Little Sister's — while generally leaving mainstream bookstores and even porn shops alone — are indicative of the state's fear of opening up a dialogue on heterosexism and issues of freedom and sexuality.

A glance at the statistics shows that there is ample evidence to support his allegations.

Between 1989 and 1992 alone, more than 34,000 shipments of books were seized at the border, most of them en route to queer booksellers.

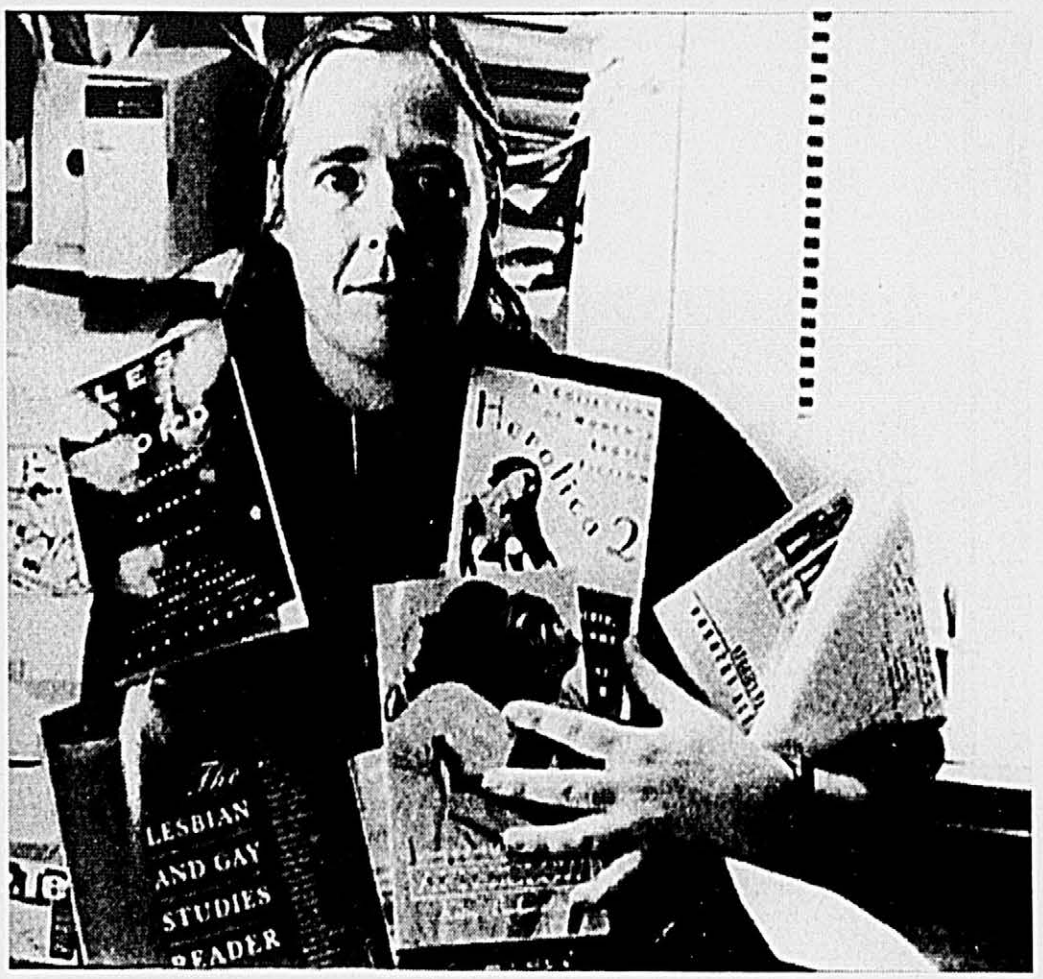
Other targeted books include texts by Black feminist scholar bell hooks, and other voices daring to challenge society's norms from the margins.

Fuller once noted that of all the books detained at the border, erotica written by women for women has the highest seizure rate of all.

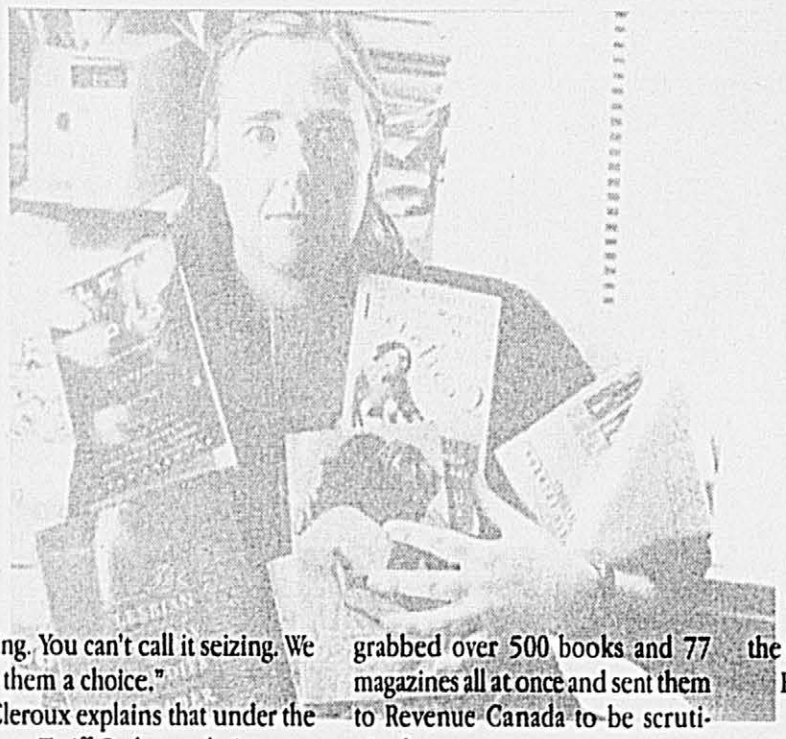
"You can't call it seizing"

At the first mention of the word "seize" Michel Cleroux, chief of media relations at Revenue Canada, is quick to point out that, "It is not

Bookstore vs Canada Customs - Round 2



JANINE FULLER



seizing. You can't call it seizing. We give them a choice."

Cleroux explains that under the current Tariff Code regulations, an individual whose material has been detained at the border may appeal the decision or return it to the country it was exported from.

"If you don't want to do one or the other," he continues, "you must surrender it [the 'obscene' material] to the Crown."

Currently, customs officers send materials they are unsure about to Ottawa's Prohibited Importations Unit at Revenue Canada. There they are scrutinized by justice department lawyers who are supposed to determine if the material is 'obscene.'

This process places a significant amount of discretionary power in the hands of customs officials, some of whom lack sufficient training in pornography and free speech issues, and may even be blatantly homophobic.

During the original trial in 1994, many customs officials admitted that the full extent of their training in literature consisted of a two-hour training seminar when they got the job. Many also admitted that they found homosexuality "repulsive."

Putting censorship on trial

Fuller recalls that Little Sister's single largest seizure occurred in 1986, when Customs officials grabbed over 500 books and 77 magazines all at once and sent them to Revenue Canada to be scrutinized.

As soon as Little Sister's name was recognized as a carrier of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered literature, its shipments were detained more regularly, she explains.

"It wasn't until after the first two years that [Little Sister's] started to have a real problem with Canada Customs," she says. "Once they became known, they had whole shipments being stopped."

Several years of detained shipments later, Little Sister's realized that it couldn't afford to stand back anymore — the seizures were destroying business.

That's when owner, Jim Deva, decided to go to the media. The publicity earned the support of the BC Civil Liberties Association.

The following year, Little Sister's took its first steps toward legal action.

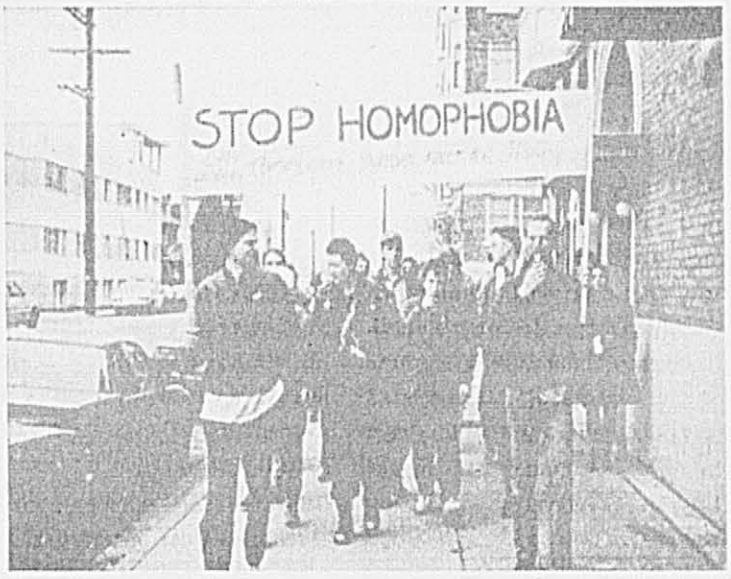
When two issues of the Advocate were detained, the bookstore challenged Customs' ruling that the magazines were obscene.

Two weeks before the court date, Customs officials claimed that they had re-examined the magazines and found them permissible after all.

But when the trial began, Customs could not return the magazines to Little Sister's — they had destroyed them.

Little Sister's filed a claim against the federal government in 1990. Four and a half years and three postponements later, what had started out as a one-week court case against Canada Customs' practices developed into a three-month courtroom drama that put censorship on trial.

PROTESTING THE THIRD BOMBING OF LITTLE SISTER'S



Bittersweet victory

Finally, in January 1995, Justice Smith, the presiding judge in BC's Superior Court, ruled that the actions of Canada Customs violated freedom of expression as well as the equal rights of gays and lesbians, and was thus an infraction on the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

While the ruling did condemn Canada Customs for its homophobic detention practices, it did nothing to curtail the agency's power to seize materials that it deems 'unfit' for public viewing.

When the verdict came in, it was another gray morning in Vancouver. Fuller was upstairs, organizing the cash register and preparing for another day at the shop. The phone's ring broke the stillness, as lawyer Jim Arvay hastily told her the verdict.

To Fuller, the news was bittersweet —on the one hand it allowed the continuity of censorship, on the other hand it was a historical victory for gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transgendered Canadians because their rights were finally being publicly and officially recognized and protected.

Fuller describes her reaction in *Restricted Entry*. "It was like hearing of my mother's death: shock, disbelief, but also a profound sense of relief from the weight/wait, and a feeling of hope amidst despair," she says.

But the battle is not over yet, and Fuller and opponents of censorship are eager to return to the courts and fight this to the end.

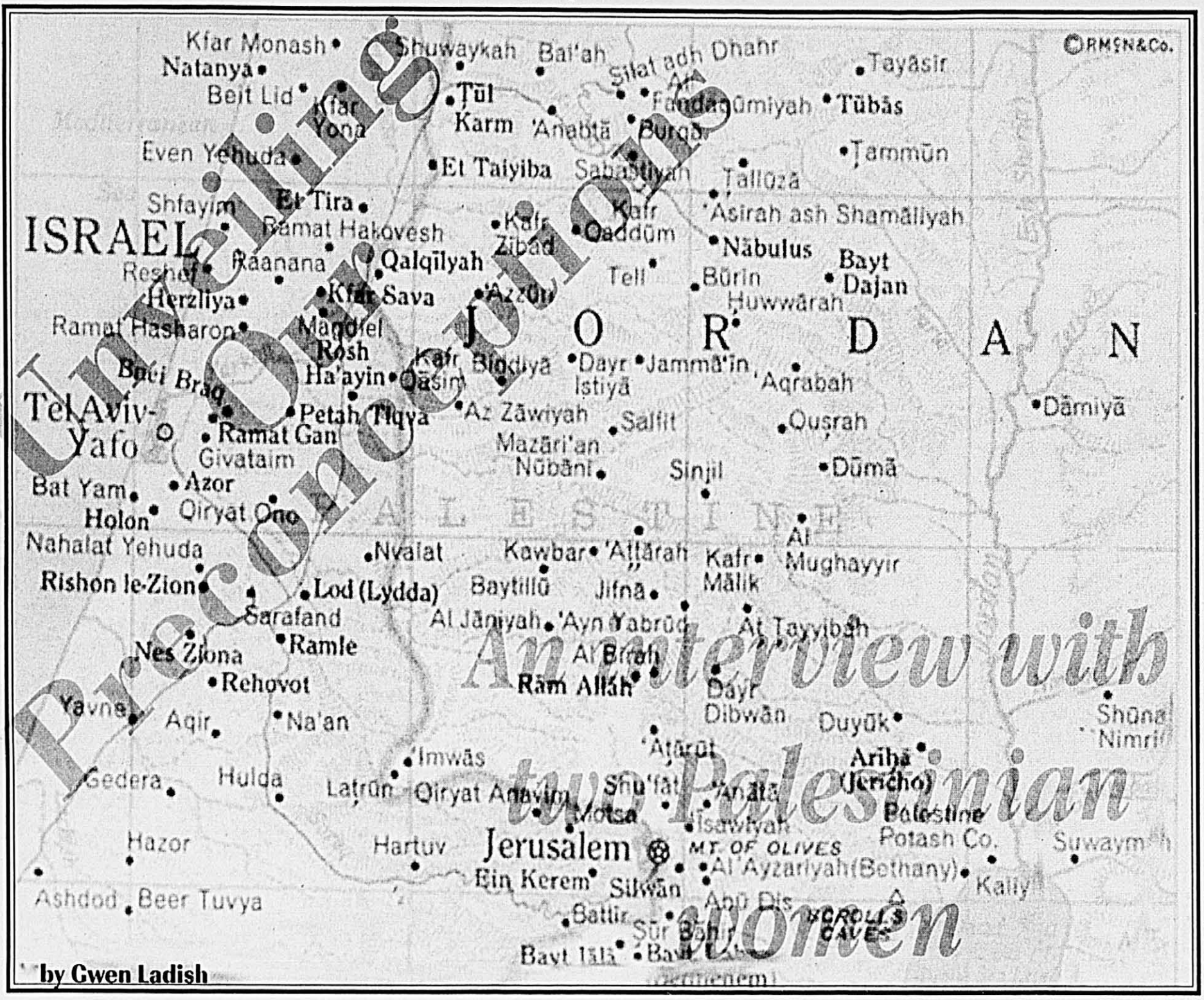
With just two more weeks to wait for their appeal to be heard, Fuller and Blackley are coming to Montréal. Tomorrow they will give a lecture at Chapters on censorship and Canada's customs laws, entitled Forbidden Passages.

When asked his opinion on whether it is right for Customs officials to have the power to detain books, Cleroux side-stepped the question.

"Basically, it's not up to me or to the public servants to judge. It's up to the Canadians," he said. "We apply the law as best we can... the laws passed by the people that *you* put in Parliament. If you don't like it, it's up to you to change it."

It's been a long and difficult fight already, but that's exactly what Little Sister's is determined to do when they finally get their day in court — again.

Janine Fuller and Stuart Blackley, co-authors of Restricted Entry *will discuss Canada's censorship laws and the Little Sister's trial at Chapters Bookstore, on Tuesday, March 10 at 19h, 3rd floor, 1171 Ste-Catherine St. W. Everyone is welcome and admission is free.*



Unveiling Discourses

Preconceptions: An interview with two Palestinian women

by Gwen Ladish

There is a commonly held "Western" assumption that women here overall have an easier experience and enjoy higher levels of equality with men. This assumption extends to notions about the position of women in the Middle East. For instance, we may be taken aback by the sight of a woman walking down the street wearing a veil. It appears to restrict free movement, and somber in colour. But how much does the appearance reflect the reality and the true essence of a woman's life? Once again, this points to a common human practice: generalizing in the absence of information.

A.A. and M.E. (who have chosen to remain anonymous) are women who have lived in the Middle East, and have had direct experience and contact with both Middle Eastern as well as North American culture. Having developed into adulthood from this particular standpoint, they are perhaps in the best position to form a well balanced judgment on freedom for women here and abroad. They offer a unique glimpse into their personal experience, and open the doors to a new and more accurate understanding of how different "we" as women throughout the world really are.

A.A. and M.E. themselves are careful with generalizations. Before they begin speaking, they stress the fact that they cannot generalize their personal experience to stand for the experience of all of the women in the Middle East. They are both Palestinian, but have lived in several countries. A.A. does have a good experience with various countries in the Middle East, however. "My dad is from Nablus and my mom is from Gaza," she says. "I was born in Kuwait and I lived almost all of my life in Jordan... I moved here three years ago." M.E. has a varied background as well. "I am Palestinian. I grew up in a Palestinian subculture in Saudi Arabia. I came to Canada four years ago."

The experience of having moved to Canada in their adolescent years has affected them. A time of personal growth coincided with exposure to a new culture, and coloured their development. M.E. nuances this effect: "Coming to North America was only one factor in a larger maturational experience. Though, in retrospect, I think living in a different culture, where one is pushed to challenge beliefs that would be otherwise taken for granted, has certainly enriched my personality in many ways. It is even more challenging when this new culture is a North American one, heavily reliant on stereotypes as basis for conclusions about 'women from the exotic lands of Arabia.'"

Contrary to expectations, both A.A. and M.E. affirm that there are in fact very few differences in the access to education, freedom, and pursuit of a professional career between men and women in their culture. When asked whether she has ever felt restricted as a woman A.A.: points this out emphatically, "No, not at all. Whatever is offered to my brother is exactly offered to me. It is exactly the same. Never ever did I feel that there was any difference."

The veil

It seems instead that differences only run on a superficial level. The wearing of the veil, though dramatic from a Western point of view, does not imply a generalized position of subservience on the part of women. It is a traditional cultural practice that is embedded within the mores. One could argue that it is comparable to the quasi-institutionalized practice of women removing hair from their legs, or wearing high-heeled shoes that damage their feet to present a good impression at work. How often do we challenge such aspects that are taken for granted within our own culture?

M.E. clears up this point:

"I should mention first that I wear a veil only in Saudi Arabia, for the sole reason that it is required by law. It doesn't physically bother me, no more than my winter coat in Canada does. I will state it as a matter of fact that the veil by no means restricts you from being extraordinary. Particularly, when you do it by choice. This for me is the crucial point. It is not about what women wear, it is about whether they are doing it willingly.

"I would even express admiration for those women who are wearing it to symbolize the rejection of the exploitation of a woman's body, and send the message that it is much more than physical. I have my own criticisms of to what extent wearing a head scarf achieves this purpose, but I admire this message. I think it is ethnocentric to criticize the dress code of a country.

"Although there are some restrictions on dress codes of men and women in Islam, there is substantial variability in how they do it [how they cover or what colors are used]. The variability is mainly cultural. I understand though that the stereotype is that the veil symbolizes oppression of women, but it need not be unless it is imposed."

When asked whether she has ever had feelings of being trapped as a woman within her culture, M.E. reevaluates the definition of trapped:

"Trapped is not too accurate of a word, and I certainly do not feel more trapped as a woman while living in my culture than living in any other. As a woman I live with discrimination everywhere, it just takes different forms. It is true that women are overtly discriminated against in Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, where I lived for example. Yet the picture in North America is not very happy either. Take the diet and fashion industries for example. North American women are slaves to their weight and physical appearance. The fake image of a super model imposes massive restrictions on women, collapsing their entire self worth to something in reality they have no control over. I would even argue that this form of discrimination is even more dangerous since it is largely unconscious, and thus not challenged. A point of caution here is that my conclusions about both

cultures are gross generalizations. Yes, exceptions do exist in both cultures."

Government and control

The wearing of the veil cannot be isolated as an event in itself. The imposition of the veil falls within other governmental institutions of control. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, the veil is just one of a general list of human rights abuses against the population as a whole. The political context acts as an overarching structure that limits the freedoms of all individuals by virtue of deriving its power from religion. Fundementalism in Saudi Arabia is used to justify the authoritarian government and the powerful restrictions that come with it. Therefore, it is a generalized climate of oppression that is to blame.

"It is a human rights issue," says M.E. "Governments use manipulatory strategies to manipulate the public, and that does not exclude North American democracies. In North America, propaganda is used to manipulate the public. In parallel, in Saudi Arabia, religious ideology is used to manipulate people. In both cases, it serves political purposes."

What is relevant are the actual lives of women. In describing their place in the world, A.A. and M.E. are very liberated. They are pushed to be successful and to pursue a challenging career.

Furthermore, the Palestinian background of A.A and M.E. imparts their life experiences with a unique character: the search for a sense of security. In effect, with the unstable nature of their origins and sense of home, developing roots within oneself becomes necessary. A.A. and M.E. have grown with models of their mothers as more than caretakers. Both of their mothers developed a career, and in both instances, their husbands shared the responsibilities of the home.

M.E. describes her mother's path, and hers in comparison: "I don't want to generalize to my experience, but I do share a comparable life discourse to my mother. We both lived in exile. Her family was forced out of Palestine when she was very young and she lived in Egypt. She got her B.A. and then worked in Kuwait for a few years. She later married my dad and moved to Saudi Arabia where with my father, she raised five children and maintained a professional career throughout. I grew up in a very democratic family, responsibilities were distributed. My father did his share of 'unconventional stuff,' housework, for example. The difference is more striking when I compare myself to my grandmother, who did not go to university and got married at sixteen, but I am sure that your grandmother had a similar situation."

Arranged marriages

One of the other 'sexist' Eastern practices which has gone under misguided scrutiny from Western onlookers is the practice of arranged marriages. Here again, the words betray the reality. There are no truly arranged marriages. Within the collectivist orientation, however, there are formations of kinships among families. As these families like to be in close and frequent interaction, they favour common marriages that will solidify the ties between them. "Arabs marry families, not individuals," says M.E. "Strong bonds develop between in-laws. The man or woman is considered part of the family they are married into."

In Arabic families, children maintain privileged relations with their parents throughout the whole span of their lives. For this reason, it is an advantage to marry into compatible families, for the benefit of all. A.A. and M.E. discuss the heartfelt significance of their parents in their lives.

Notions of freedom

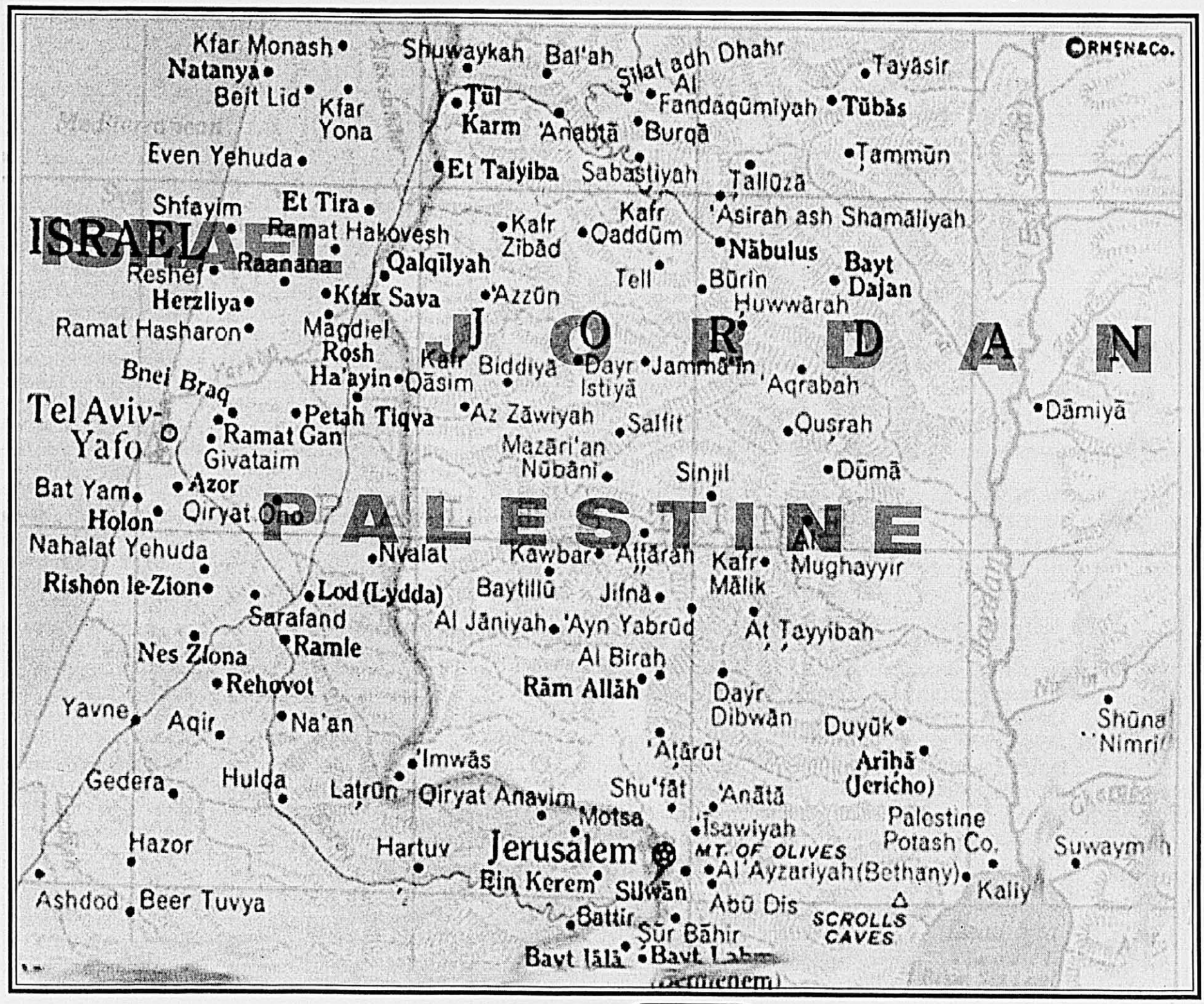
This brings up the notion of individual freedom. The conception of freedom is perhaps one of the real points of difference. Many college students in North America resist a parent's involvement in crucial life decisions such as career direction and lifestyle. University is a time to break free from the home and forge one's own identity. But for A.A. and M.E., their parents come into play in a significant way. They are a part of who they are, and they like it that way.

"Again, problems with definitions," says M.E. "What is freedom? It is certainly not rebellion. In fact, like conformity rebellion is a form of control, you're just opposing something without taking true choices about matters. I do care about what [my parents] think, and I take their opinion very seriously when it comes to major decisions in my life. That does not make me less free in my choices. On the contrary, I do willingly.

"For one thing, I am very grateful for their sacrifices, I respect their constant effort to provide me with the security that their experience of exile as Palestinians stripped away from them. Also I take them as a source of wisdom that is available and willing to provide. I do not feel controlled by my parents, nor do I feel obligated in any way to follow their judgment, nor do they expect me to do so strongly. But I do prompt it and think about it, and it does prove valuable. Disagreement is present, yet it is not hostile, there is always room for discussion."

Throughout their respective interviews, A.A. and M.E. repeatedly contend that the subjective experience of a woman cannot be generalized to culture. However, what does seem to be a constant for all cultures is that women derive a sense of power and satisfaction through the accomplishment of their deepest goals. Apparently, these are not necessarily inhibited within Middle Eastern countries. Visible differences in dress may shock precisely because they are visible and signify 'the other'. But these differences do not define who they are.

Identity reaches much further than dress. It is consolidated through the meaning women give to their lives, and the freedom they have to build themselves. In this view, then, what is freedom? Perhaps it is the space to realize one's potential as a human being.



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Personal Essays

Fucking Around

The value of infidelity

by Kim Valenta

'The lion is faithful because the lioness beats him.'
-J.P. Barou, 1981.

The only thing which has characterized all of my most successful sexual relationships is infidelity. Monogamy is cited by most to be one of the integral components of a healthy relationship, and though it can eventually have its place, it is not an institution that should be upheld simply because it is what is traditionally taught.

My happiest relationships have been ones in which my partner and myself were free to explore sexuality outside of one another. Mutual infidelity has always resulted in comfortably open lines of communication, a truly sharing sex life and the resulting closeness. It has also alleviated that "trapped" feeling which is so prevalent a complaint amongst young and old couples all around the world.

I feel physically ill when a partner demands monogamy of me, and thus the relationship is automatically rendered unhappy and short. I don't fully understand this onslaught of actual physical nausea, but am content to attribute it to the physical manifestation of the aforementioned feeling of entrapment. Conversely, when I demand monogamy of a partner it is for the express reason of capturing them; that is to say that demanding fidelity of someone is not something I do because I feel any real desire to be with them alone, but because I feel unbearably self-conscious about my position and so wish to artificially solidify it.

"Artificial" is a word appropriate to most instances of monogamy, because its historical roots are contrived, and to my knowledge there is no such thing as monogamy in the wild. I cannot think, as many religious scholars would have me believe, that the reason for monogamy in the human sphere is that we are magically endowed with an ability to reason which is meant to stunt our animality. Are we alone on the receiving end of a divine prophecy of morality and thus responsible for upholding a strictly "reasonable" code of behaviour? I think not. Then from whence did this harnessing of natural sexual energy come? In my mind it is the product of the objectification that began to assert itself roughly ten thousand years ago, at the dawn of the agricultural revolution.

At this point, for the first time in the history of our genus, humankind began to feel ownership for the land on which they lived, as sedentism fostered closer ties to geographically-defined places. People tilled their Earth, instead of following favorite game animals. They began to produce surpluses of food, which led immediately to subtle wealth distinctions, and more importantly, they were finally allowed to own more than they could carry. At the time of the agricultural revolution the archaeological record shows that a sudden explosion of various utilitarian and decorative items. This indicates the first strains of Capitalism. Men were owning things, and women (highly prized resources) were not exempt.

Paternity is never assured in a state where women are free to wander and explore to the same extent as men. And so women are tied to the home, made financially dependent on their husbands, and shamed into total obedience through taboos, religion and culture. Thus, while men are free to indulge in extramarital sexual activity, women are left at home too busy nursing their young and too fearful of society's wrath to step out of an unhappy a marriage and into the world of sexual freedom. Thus the soil a man has tilled, and whatever fortune he has amassed is passed on, with his name, to a strapping and undoubtedly legitimate gaggle of sons. These are the roots of misogyny, and these are the roots of monogamy.

I cannot apply such an offensively unnatural system to my life and expect any happy results.

However, I do believe that fidelity can have its place eventually. This latter view is one formed by my unwavering romanticism, by my steady belief in that One Special Person, built specifically for me. If and when I find this soul mate unit, I assume that monogamy will follow, because they will fulfill my every need so completely that there simply won't be any room for another. But until I find this person, I won't be content with anything less than the joy and freedom and ease of infidelity.

Personal Essays

No Left Turn?

A more inclusive approach to feminism

by Ilana Ron

Southern belles; hard-liners; hawks; heartless; conformists; pawns of the patriarchy. So often, those women adhering to conservative political ideologies receive the wrath of feminists from a more liberal persuasion. Jeff Weber's article about the Promise Keepers in the February 16, 1998 issue of the *Daily* showcases this condemnation; insinuating conservative women to be outside the realm of solidarity, they assume pariah status within the feminist community. Weber gave a brief synopsis of the Independent Women's Forum's (IWF) activities, and interestingly enough, termed the creation of the IWF as "the establishment of women's sects" by the Christian Promise Keepers. Surely IWF proceeds along a controversial path, especially when compared to the liberal policies of most well-known and influential feminist groups, yet Weber's treatment of this organized alternative to traditional feminism stands loaded with fallacies.

LET'S NOT FIGHT AMONGST OURSELVES

IWF holds no formal financial or structural ties with the Republican Party or the Christian Right. Registered as a non-profit lobby group, the IWF provides issue analysis, publicity campaigns, and sponsors publications in an attempt to change policy outcomes and create a more inclusive definition of "women's issues." Conservative theory intertwines with objective analysis of the issues most pertinent in the majority of women's lives, namely income, employment opportunities and conditions, child-rearing and safety. Many members of the IWF subscribe to conservative ideologies across the full range of political issues, and see little reason to isolate women's causes from a whole host of congruent political planks.

Surprisingly, I had worked and identified with radical feminist causes for most of my intellectually aware life, had voted for Clinton, and inflicted a wrath of fury normally reserved for war criminals and detention-serving disciplinarians upon all admitting conservatives. A twist of internship fate landed me at the Independent Women's Forum, and suddenly, my liberal credentials were face-to-face with free market economists and welfare specialists, AIDS activists and politicians.

Poised, confident women were abundant, generating heated debate on the failures of the presidency and the causes of anorexia. I cast my constricting coat of left-wing self-righteousness aside for a minute, and saw an ironic traditional feminist success at hand. Women had finally assumed the power to influence policy and create dissension within their own ranks. Political opinion swelled with passion and painstakingly researched details. The cramped office space of IWF was a meeting ground for women from all walks of life, not just cashmere-clad, white, and Christian clones from the suburbs. Blazers were thrown off in haste, cowlicks appeared to the dismay of carefully arranged ponytails, as women reached for the fruit of political leverage. Conservative women, in rejecting liberal feminism, still raised their voices and entered the political process.

All clear-headed and vision-blessed women agree that legitimate problems still face the female community as a whole. The IWF does not disagree with the feminist assertion that shortcomings exist, just on the methods typically proposed as solutions. Most feminists advocate government-sponsored measures to pave the way for equal results between men and women. Conservative feminists point to equal opportunities as indicating a fair and balanced environment. When opportunities are equal, not all women will elect certain options in the same ratio as men: culture, societal trends, and the reality of child-bearing dictate different preferences. Therefore, to use the clichéd example of the admission policies of engineering faculties, if women and men are not equally distributed within a specific faculty, patriarchal discrimination may not be the evil force holding women back.

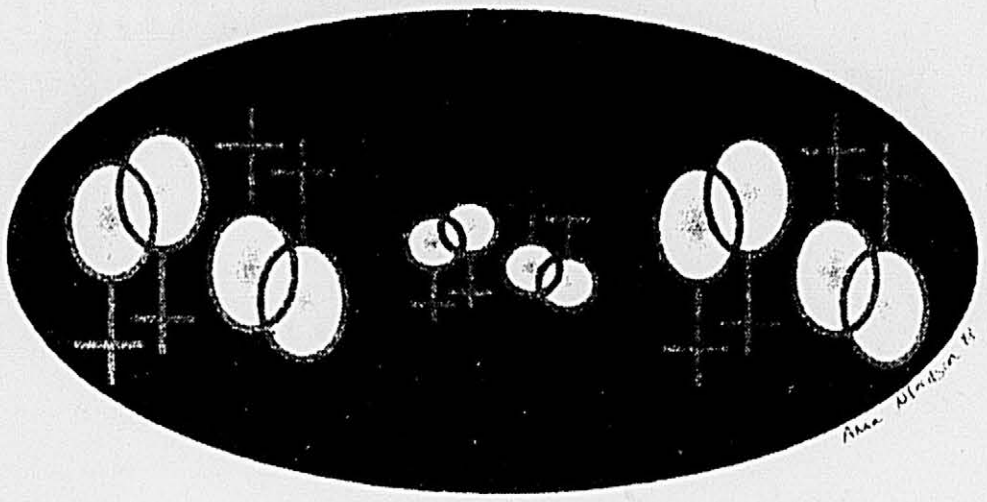
Of course liberal feminists carved the way for the advancement of women admirably. Women began to contemplate grasping the reigns of power in Western culture. Wall Street, Congress, and American-style entrepreneurship rose as new rallying cries of female power. Bras were burned, birth control pills were swallowed in a liberating gulp, and sexual mores were loosened to allow more room for experimentation and pleasure. But, in the process, traditional modes of women's lives were deemed stodgy and oppressed; child-rearing no longer possessed the golden gleam associated with motherhood. Stay-at-home moms appeared victim to societal conventions and constricting husbands. Around the historical female bastions of teaching, pre-school care, and the general service industry a shading cloud of dust gathered; the appeal of "making it big" for women overpowered concerns for social justice.

An inclusive feminist theory should advocate all choices made by women, even those choices deemed controversial or "backwards" by the ruling establishment. Women should be present in the multiple strata inherent to any modern society. Just as Diaspora Jews marveled at Jewish prostitutes and Jewish truck drivers during the creation of the state of Israel, women should applaud all career choices made by fellow females. A female engineer does not possess more progressive worth than a female baker. Both have entered the work place; both contribute in tangible ways to the greater good.

Certain strands of radical feminism, so-called "difference feminism," argue that women inherently possess different modes of thinking than men. States *The Economist*, "Difference feminists reckon that women are equal to men (thus the relative shortage of female physicists and auditors is held to be evidence of sexism) except when they are superior (thus the relative shortage of female muggers)." Conservative feminism maintains that no intrinsic difference in methods of thinking exist between the sexes. Yes, gender traits may have been socially constructed over the centuries, but feminist claims of one mode of being as superior are unfounded and unfair. Perhaps women have been socialized to be nurturers; however, the condemning of female nurturing puts a barrier on which female expressions are deemed acceptable.

By the early 1990s, only 1/3 of females enrolled in universities self-identified as feminists. Over 80% of the same group polled, however, advocated equal opportunities for women. Are those non-feminist women suffering from a severe lack of "consciousness?" The Independent Women's Forum would emphatically answer no. The concept of raising consciousness' calls for an enlightened group of women to shine the light for those still left in the dark. Yet, the dark often contains an interactive and cross-cutting set of cleavages for most women. Race, class, ethnicity, religion, and language cause the notion of a feminist consciousness to become tangled up in a web of conflicting *isms*.

The majority of IWF members adhere to a general conservative outlook in political matters. The spread of conservative offerings includes individual responsibility, strong families, more opportunity, and less government intervention. My personal politics stray tangentially from the conservative graph. Less government intervention is pragmatic in a utopian society. Individual responsibility cannot fill the potholes of society when rampant ills are present. But theory aside, I grew to observe feminism without rose-tinted glasses at IWF. Feminism as a movement, a movement dying for members and gasping for oxygen in a hostile media, must lose its attaching political demands for women. Not all women will stop voting for conservatives; not all women will stop wearing low-cut shirts for men. They are our sisters; they must be respected.



Fear Of 'Breeding Queer'

Challenging the lesbian adoption laws

by Rebekah Johnston and Kara Richardson

In May 1995, Justice James Paul Nevins of the Ontario Court decided that the Constitutional Charter of Rights did not permit the exclusion of same-sex couples from adoption privileges. Before Nevins' ruling, a lesbian or gay person would not have been allowed to adopt his or her partner's child because Ontario adoption legislation allowed only 'spouses' to do so. Nevins interpreted 'spouse' to include a partner in a same-sex relationship. The particular case that elicited this ruling involved four lesbian couples and the biological children of one of the women in each couple. It is unclear whether or not Nevins' ruling would support adoption by a same-sex couple of a child who is not the biological offspring of one of the partners. Before Nevins' ruling, a lesbian or gay man was not (legally) prevented from adopting, as a single person, in Ontario. In fact, anyone over the age of eighteen may adopt a child if the relevant authorities think that this would be in the interests of that child.

Like many other 'gay rights' cases brought before the courts, such as those concerning same-sex benefits, spousal support obligations and immigration, the legal debate over lesbian adoption centres on the interpretation of the word 'spouse' and the prohibition of discrimination in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Like many other 'gay rights' cases brought before the courts, such as those concerning same-sex benefits, spousal support obligations and immigration, the legal debate revolves around the interpretation of the word 'spouse' and the prohibition of discrimination in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Unlike race, sex, religion and other categories on the basis of which discrimination is prohibited in Canada, sexual orientation is not explicitly named; however, it has several times been interpreted by courts as analogous to these other categories and treated accordingly. But not always. Through the courts, lesbian and gay couples have won important victories in recent years, while others have lost. Not everybody wants to interpret 'spouse' to include a partner in a same-sex relationship. Not everybody thinks that discrimination against gays and lesbians is insupportable under the Charter of Rights.

In addition to the reluctance of some judges to interpret 'spouse' to include same-sex couples, successful court cases alone do not create an ideal situation.

Although an initial court decision in favour of granting gays and lesbians the right to adopt children makes it easier to win subsequent similar cases, each case still has to be taken to court. Susan High, of the *Lesbian Mother's Support Society* in Calgary Alberta, explains that, "Once a case is in place the next is easier... because you don't have to go through the same process of assembling witnesses and studies. Instead the ruling from the initial case can be applied." Nevertheless, you must bring your case before the court, which is an expensive and often emotionally difficult process.

Furthermore, relying on the courts does not create a uniform standard of treatment for gays and lesbians across the country because decisions made in one province are not binding in other provinces. In effect, the courts do not ensure a Canada wide standard of treatment.

"A judge may look at a case from another province as a point of reference, but that case is not legally binding," explains High. "There should be a minimal standard of protection across the country." What is needed (and what is appropriate, given the Charter) is government legislation that would explicitly grant lesbians and gay men the same rights that married or common-law couples assume in Canada.

In 1994, Ontario's NDP government brought forward such a bill (Bill 167) and the fiasco that followed revolved around the claims that the public was not ready to accept that lesbian and gay couples should have the same rights as their heterosexual counterparts. A Liberal government attempt to include sexual orientation as grounds for discrimination claims in the Canadian Human Rights Act was preempted by Liberal backbenchers who threatened to join the Reform Party. From this it is evident that many politicians are homophobic and/or that many politicians believe most of their constituents to be homophobic enough to refuse to elect a candidate who has supported, or at least not opposed, gay rights legislation.

"If you look at general Angus Reid surveys most people feel that there shouldn't be discrimination based on sexual orientation," says High. "But they get wary when it comes to redefining marriage and family." Do most Canadians think that 'family' should be defined such that gays and lesbians cannot create families of their own? If they do think so, does that make them right?

Sometimes 'public opinion' about lesbian or gay adoption revolves around the claim that children need a father and a mother, preferably married to each other, in order to be well-adjusted, that is, to be good members of society. These claims are difficult to support due to changes in family structure reflected in statistics. Others fear that gay parents will raise children who do not conform to their gender roles. Nevins, the Ontario judge described above, decided that there was no evidence that the children of lesbian or gay parents would develop gender roles or identities inconsistent with their biological sex. Why do we care if they do? Some people object to gay and lesbian parents because they fear that these people will raise their children to 'become gay'. This fear makes little sense, unless accompanied by a clear rejection of gay people per se. The prospect of children, brought up either in gay or in heterosexual families 'becoming gay' (or bisexual) should not bother us, unless we believe that it is somehow wrong to be gay.

The arguments advanced by that element of the population that wishes to deny gays and lesbians the right to adopt children are based on the assumptions that Queer people, just because they are Queer, cannot be good parents. Ideas about good parenting skills, however, are not generally linked to sexual orientation, but to abilities and skills that revolve around care and love. Ironically, difficulties peculiar to children of gay parents stem not from the sexual preference of their mothers or fathers, but from the prejudices of a homophobic society.

Lesbian Mother's Support Society (Calgary, Alberta) website: www.lesbian.org/lesbian-moms

Making Their Mark

Women from Canada's past

Timeline

Women have always been a part of Canadian history, and yet they are mentioned in history books only in passing.

Flip through any conventional history textbook. Based on its depiction of the way it all happened, it is easy to believe that women were only background figures, toiling the earth, bearing and rearing children and keeping house while the men made all the important decisions.

If we accept that framework, it is also easy to believe that the women's contributions that *are* cited pale in comparison to the men's, and were indeed insignificant in the larger scheme of Canada's growth.

It is hardly surprising, then, that many people assume that women never really played an integral part in the growth of this nation.

The women mentioned in this article prove those assumptions wrong.

Women have always partaken in the sculpting of this country, whether it be through art, political action or motherhood. These heroines are testimony to the fact that women have not only been a firm backbone, but a brave and active force in the development of Canada.

EUNICE WILLIAMS (1696-1785) Mohawk by Choice — Québec.

Eunice was seven when she and other family members were kidnapped by French and Mohawk forces and taken to New France. Adopted by a Mohawk family, Eunice later repeatedly refused to rejoin her Puritan family in New England. She married a Mohawk and today her Iroquois descendants live in Kahnawake and St. Regis, Québec.

MARIE-HENRIETTE ROSS known more commonly as "GRANNY ROSS" Midwife and Healer — Nova Scotia (1762-1860).

Granny Ross was an Acadian woman whose skills and adventures have made her an important part of Nova Scotian history. She was a midwife and healer for French and English settlers on Cape Breton Island. Even when blind and elderly, Marie-Henriette's services as a healer were much in demand.

CATHERINE SCHUBERT (1835-1918) Overlander — British Columbia.

Catherine was four months pregnant when she and her husband began their overland trek across the prairies and the Rocky Mountains with three children ages 5, 3 and 1. After many hardships and terrifying adventures the Schuberts arrived in British Columbia where Catherine supported the family while her husband unsuccessfully prospected for gold. She strongly believed in the value of education, taught herself to read as a teenager and later set up schools in her own home to teach others.

FRANCES ANNE HOPKINS (1838-1919) Artist — Québec, Ontario.

Frances traveled the fur trade routes between Fort William (Thunder Bay) and Lachine, Québec, sketching along the way. She later produced large, lush oil paintings of the huge, fur trade canoes and the voyageurs who guided them. The "voyageur paintings," which provide a detailed record of a vanished way of life, are vaguely familiar to many Canadians, although few realize the artist was female. Her paintings were exhibited at the Royal Academy of Art in London, the Art Association of Montréal, the Royal Society of British Artists, the Society of Women Artists and a variety of galleries.

SYLVIA STARK (1839-1944) Pioneer, Black History — British Columbia.

At the age of 12, Sylvia traveled with her family in a wagon train across the continent to California. However, the black community felt unsafe in California and later Sylvia and her family immigrated north to British Columbia. As a pioneer on Saltspring Island, Sylvia faced many dangers and adventures and died at the age of 109.

ADELAIDE HOODLESS (1857-1910) Educator — Ontario.

When Adelaide's baby son died from drinking contaminated milk, she dedicated her life to teaching girls and women the complicated science of child care and home management.

Her idea of a practical, educational, self-help association for rural women became reality in the form of the extremely successful Women's Institutes.

Adelaide, who died at the age of 52, founded or helped to found the National YWCA, the National Council of Women, the Victorian Order of Nurses and the Women's Institute.

VICTORIA CALLIHOO (1861-1966) Metis, Witness to the Buffalo Days — Alberta.

As a teenager, Victoria took part in the buffalo hunts which provided the Metis with much of their food and other supplies. When the buffalo were gone, Victoria and her large family lived on a small farm and also ran a sawmill and hotel in Lac Ste. Anne. Victoria's detailed recollections of the "buffalo days" and of the former Metis way of life, provide valuable insights into Canada's history.

DR. MAUDE ABBOTT (1869-1940) Physician and Scientist — Québec.

A brilliant scholar and tireless worker, Dr. Abbott became a world authority on congenital heart ailments. The sole financial support for both herself and an invalid sister, Maude nonetheless took on many unpaid research tasks and during her lifetime had over 140 titles to her credit. During those years, medical people from Canada traveling abroad were often greeted with: "Ah then, you must know Dr. Maude Abbott."

MARY RITER HAMILTON (1873-1954) Artist — Manitoba.

A successful member of the European art scene, Mary returned to Canada during World War I. At the end of the war, she returned to Europe with a mission to paint the terrible battlefields where so many Canadians had died. Mary was given an award by the French government for her battlefield paintings but her work received little notice in Canada. The later loss of sight in one eye hindered Mary's

ability to paint, and she died in poverty.

HARRIET BROOKS PITCHER (1876-1933) Nuclear Physicist — Québec. A brilliant student in physics, Harriet made a number of discoveries about radiation which added important pieces to the jigsaw puzzle of modern nuclear science.

She conducted research at Cambridge University, taught at McGill University and Barnard College, and conducted research in Paris for the famous Dr. Marie Curie. Harriet gave up research to marry and raise a family. Her death at age 56 was probably caused by prolonged exposure to radiation while conducting research.

MILLIE GAMBLE (1887-1986) Photographer — Prince Edward Island.

When Millie began to take photographs of friends and family in Prince Edward Island, she became part of North America's amateur photography trend. With no running water inside the house, Millie used the hand pump in the yard to wash off her camera's glass plates. Millie's photographs, which are now part of the PEI Public Archives, record the details of a woman's life in rural Canada.

AGNES MACPHAIL (1890-1954) Member of Parliament — Ontario.

Agnes became the first female member of Canada's Parliament when she was elected in 1918, just as Canadian women (with property) got the vote. As an MP, she championed the rights of farmers and worked hard for social and prison reform. Defeated at the polls after 19 years in Ottawa, she ran provincially and was twice elected to Ontario's provincial legislature. She continued to champion the underprivileged until her death at age 63.

EDNA JACQUES (1891-1978) Poet and Author — Saskatchewan.

A gifted poet who wrote 3000 poems during her lifetime, Edna grew up on a Saskatchewan homestead. She sold many of her poems to newspapers, but Edna always had to work at other jobs in order to provide a living for herself and her daughter. Her poetry touched thousands of people with its warmth and gentle wisdom.

MARGARET DULEY(1894-1968) Author — Newfoundland.

Although Margaret belonged to Newfoundland's privileged class, her novels were usually set in the island's isolated fishing villages. Margaret's skillful, unflinching portrayal of life in the outports makes her one of Newfoundland's finest writers. She developed Parkinson's Disease and died at the age of 73.

PITSEOLAK (1904-1983) Artist, Inuit History — North-West Territories.

Pitseolak and her family lived the traditional lifestyle of the Inuit until she moved into a permanent settlement at Cape Dorset in the 1950s. An impoverished widow, Pitseolak began to draw supernatural creatures and scenes from "the old ways" and sell her artwork through an Inuit art cooperative. As a result of her talent and her hard work, Pitseolak became one of the most famous of the famous Cape Dorset artists.

From *Her Story: Women From Canada's Past* and *Her Story II: Women From Canada's Past* by Susan E. Merit.

For more information consult the website at: http://www.niagara.com/~merrwill/herstory2.html#anchor236455

Nos Compañeras

The viewpoints of Puerto Rican women POW's behind bars

by Verda Cook

"We continue to be buried alive in these prisons. It gets more difficult daily to be able to deal with this extended isolation," says Carmen Valentín, a Puerto Rican nationalist serving 98 years.

While the U.S. is vocal in its condemnation of breaches of human rights in foreign countries, an estimated 150 political prisoners, officially denied, are currently serving sentences in American jails. Many of them qualify under the United Nations definition of prisoners of war (POWs): "...combatants struggling against colonial and alien domination and racist regimes captured as prisoners."

Many of these POWs are Puerto Ricans, guilty of seeking sovereignty for their nation and an end to American economic exploitation and cultural domination.

The colonization of Puerto Rico

If military, judicial, cultural and economic domination form the basic requirements of colonialism, then Puerto Rico is, this year, indisputably celebrating its centennial as an American colony. Despite the reality, however, it is officially recognized by the U.S. as an "unincorporated territory," meaning that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens yet they are denied the "non fundamental rights" that Americans enjoy. Citizens of a 2nd class, caught in the void between citizenship and enslavement. An ambiguity that maintains the strings of their dependency.

In the 1950's and 60s, Puerto Rico was the shining star of the Caribbean. A model for the aspirations of the region: a movement from rural agriculturalism to urban industrialism. The U.S. instituted, and Puerto Rico endorsed, economic policies actively recruiting foreign investment. The belief was that prosperity would eventually lead to autonomy.

Although there have been some improvements in the standard of living, the benefits have mostly and unequally favoured American corporations. The process of industrialization has created an urban mass of unskilled workers. Urban schools and health facilities become overrun and deteriorate as foreign firms refuse to decentralize their factories based on financial considerations.

Today, 70% of all productive wealth is owned by external investors, most of which are American. The vast majority of this profit is extracted and invested elsewhere. Also today, around 45% of Puerto Ricans live in absolute poverty and half the nation's population depends on food stamps.

The FALN

Almost 20 years have past since the capture of many FALN (Armed Forces of National Liberation) members on April 4, 1980.

Puerto Rican women have, and continue to have, an assertive role in the liberation movement. The 5 female FALN members imprisoned are Carmen Valentín 98 years, Ida Luz Rodríguez 75 years, Alicia Rodríguez 85 years, Dylcia Págan 63 years and Alejandrina Torres 35 years. The women of the FALN have vocally maintained and disseminated their principles, even after decades behind bars.

The organization took a radical approach to the Puerto Rican liberation movement after a shared perception, voiced by Valentín, that "Many Puerto Ricans have pursued legal avenues to attempt to correct this inequality, only to find themselves wrapped up in the tentacles of bureaucracy and powerlessness."

Starting in the late 1970s, the organization began setting bombs and declaring the likelihood of violence in face of the U.S.'s continued occupation.

According to Págan, "we took an international law position which states that according to the Geneva Convention we have the right in a declared or an undeclared war situation... to use whatever was at our disposal, and the right to pick up arms.

The long sentences, some ranging up to 105 years, seem strangely surreal, in light of the fact that all the convicted were first time offenders.

Further Valentín points out that "...if we were criminals like the U.S. claims, we would have been released years ago because we have served more time for these charges than the most vicious criminal will ever serve."

What all the women believe is that "This excessive sentence was meaded out to scare Puerto Rican people from taking any further action in defense of the country."

The spoils of Puerto Rico

Puerto Rico is a highly profitable venture. American corporations reap the rewards of tax holidays and a cheap, unskilled labour force, along with a political stability imposed by American governance.

Ida Luz Rodríguez sees the situation of her nation as only one of a world of examples: "The control of government policies throughout the entire world by transitional corporate interests has created the globalization of capital, poverty and environmental imbalances and devastation."

The 'real' crime was the creation of a movement aimed at exposing and arresting the exploitation of the disadvantaged. Not through the institutionalized systems of American "justice" that would only symbolize their subordination, but through the tactics of war. However Valentín sees a tragic benefit: "If it is because they want to kill us slowly, with so much suffering, it is more dangerous the spirit of a martyr for a cause then the person per se.

"They are trying to show the world that they will keep us subjugated and continue to do what they want to in our country, and incarcerate and try to kill or change by force or suffering anyone that attempts to change that."

The struggle for independence is burdened by immense consequences for all Puerto Ricans. A system of dependency has been constructed and overthrowing it runs the real risks of increased poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. The banner of freedom in Puerto Rico stumbles under daily survival. Recently, the U.S. *decided* to grant Puerto Ricans a referendum to decide their political future. But their dependency for many Puerto Ricans, especially those most disadvantaged, often limits actual choice.

Torres, Rodríguez, Rodríguez, Págan and Valentín have made their own lives a sacrifice to our future. Their sacrifices are our motivation; their commitment our reassurance.

Puerto Rican sisters are fighting a power that oppresses us all; a force that seeks constantly to create and then exploit a disadvantaged population. Whether it be the subordination of nations, or the domination of the female gender, the motives and rewards are similar. Dependency is a powerful tool in the maintenance of advantageous exploitation.

Each woman deliberately chose their actions. Valentín asserts "It was a process preceded by years of community work and study.... I knew the exact price of the actions that I took. I am a person who believes that nations like individuals must ultimately decide how they want to be perceived by those with whom they live and how they want to be judged by history later. Keep those thoughts in your mind and there is no room for regret"

The Puerto Rican women in U.S. jails, according to Valentín have been "...emmersed in this madness to prove a righteous point. We have to sacrifice tremendously in order to attain dignity."

Events for McGill Women's Union International Women's Week March 8-14

Sunday, March 8

Tune in to CKUT (90.3fm) from 7-24 for the 17 hour programme *Women's Waves: Making Space for Women's Voices.*

Monday, March 9

Prof. Deslauriers speaks *On Talking and Not Talking* in Shatner 425 at 13h. Discussion will follow.

Movie Night: *Gas Food Lodgings* @ 17-19h & *Antonia's Line* @ 19-21h/3475 Peel, 2nd floor-Blue Room.

Tuesday, March 10

Brown-Bag Lunch: Open discussion on Body Image in collaboration with Peer Health Education @ Women's Union, Shatner 423, 11:30-13h.

Dr. Alison Carpenter presents *Thinking Sex Positive* @ 19h, 550 Sherbrooke W., West Tower, suite 1180.

Wednesday, March 11

All day Bake Sale: 1st floor Shatner.

Women's Union Open-House-and-Pasta Lunch. 11:30-13h, Women's Union, Shatner 423.

Women, Celebrate Our Diversity: International Women's Week Potluck. Traditional foods welcome. Come in native dress. Women's Union, room 423 @ 18h. Followed by Tara Leitzell from Amnesty International presenting: *Human Rights are Women's Rights.*

Thursday, March 12

Midwife Kirsten Martin speaks on the experience of midwifery in Shatner 425 @ 13h30.

Women's Union 5th Monthly Open Mic Nite Bash @ Thompson House (basement) McTavish. Sign-ups 20h30, presentation 21h. Call for submission, women-positive artwork. Bring it all in @ 20h30 for display. $3 or 3 cans of food (all performers and artists come for free). Draw for prizes @ 22h30. Bring your tickets (must be present to claim prize).

Friday, March 13

Finale: Wine and Cheese in collaboration with WISE. Come celebrate @ 18h, Shatner 423.

All Week

The Women's Union will have info tables on 1st floor Shatner.

Amnesty International will have a display.

Buy tickets to win prizes from The Body Shop.

Purchase Birth Control & Alternative Menstrual Products @ cost.

Numbers With Integrity

Statistical facts on working women

Women's Bureau, U.S. Department of Labour

Slow progress or scandal?

Women's earnings as a percentage of men's, 1979-1992

Year	Hourly	Weekly	Annual
1979	64.1	62.5	59.7
1980	64.8	64.4	60.2
1981	65.1	64.6	59.2
1982	67.3	65.4	61.7
1983	69.4	66.7	63.6
1984	69.8	67.8	63.7
1985	70.0	68.2	64.6
1986	70.2	69.2	64.3
1987	72.1	70.0	65.2
1988	73.8	70.2	66.0
1989	75.4	70.1	68.7
1990	76.8	71.8	71.6
1991	77.5	74.0	69.9
1992	79.4	75.4	70.6

(Source: Bureau of Labour Statistics and Census)

What is the earnings gap? No matter how you crunch the numbers, the message remains clear: North American men are still getting paid more than women. In fact, if we take male earnings as the "yardstick," we can see that women are paid just a percentage of men's salaries for doing the same work. This is the earnings gap in a nutshell. [If you'd like to do the math, the gap is officially equal to the difference between the full, male wage rate (100%) and the female wage rate (anywhere between 1-99% depending on the field, but usually around 60-70%).]

A women's job is...

20 Leading Occupations of Employed Women
1996 Annual Averages

Occupations	Employed (nos. in thousands)	Percent Women (Both Sexes)	Women's Median Usual Weekly Earnings1	Ratio of Woman's Earnings To Men's Earnings
Total, 16 years and over	58,501	100	418	75
Secretaries	3,119	98.6	406	N.A.
Cashiers	2,230	78.1	240	87.6
Registered nurses	1,853	93.3	695	95.3
Sales supervisors and proprietors	1,689	37.5	415	68.3
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	1,636	88.4	286	84.4
Bookkeepers, accounting and auditing clerks	1,631	91.9	396	88
Elementary school teachers	1,538	83.3	648	90.1
Waiters and Waitresses	1,071	77.9	253	82.1
Sales workers, other commodities2	1,026	68.4	273	80.3
Handlers, equipment cleaners, helpers, and laborers	971	19.3	295	86
Receptionists	930	96.9	333	N.A.
Machine operators, assorted materials	915	32.1	327	75.7
Cooks	869	42.2	242	86.7
Accountants and auditors	862	56	561	72.8
Textile, apparel and furnishing machine operators	793	74.1	257	82.9
Janitors and cleaners	769	34.9	272	86.9
Administrative support occupations, n.e.c3	697	76.9	450	87.5
Investigators and adjusters, excluding insurance	692	76.3	458	70.6
Secondary school teachers	686	55.9	643	84.6

1 — Wage and salary for full-time workers.
2 — Includes foods, drugs, health, and other commodities.
3 — Not elsewhere classified.
N.A.: Median not available where base is less than 50,000 male workers.
(Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Women's Bureau, February 1997)

Historically, women have been "crowded" into a few occupations. In 1992 the six most prevalent occupations for women were, in order of magnitude: secretaries, school teachers (excluding those teaching in colleges and universities and those teaching in preschool and kindergarten), cashiers, managers and administrators, registered nurses, and bookkeepers and accounting clerks. In 1992 more than one-third of all full-time women workers were employed in these occupations.

It should be remembered, however, that occupational segregation has been slowly diminishing. Today, there are fewer "women's" jobs and fewer "men's" jobs than in earlier periods. There has been a significant change in women's labour force participation rates since World War II, particularly for women between the ages of 25 and 54. In fact, most women work today, including mothers of small children.

Nevertheless, many traditionally male-dominated fields remain male-dominated. Women are still under-represented in a number of "nontraditional occupations" — comprising only 25 percent or less of the labour force in some areas.

The few, the brave, the groundbreaking

NONTRADITIONAL OCCUPATIONS FOR WOMEN IN 1996*
(numbers in thousands)

Occupations	Employed (Both Sexes)	Employed (Female)	Percent (Female)
Guards	811	200	24.6
Messengers	175	41	23.7
Butchers and meat cutters	242	54	22.3
Chemical technicians	84	18	21.5
Drafting occupations	233	49	20.9
Architects	163	27	16.7
Sheriffs, bailiffs, and other law enforcement officers	126	20	15.8
Metalworking and plastic working machine operators	390	57	14.7
Dentists	137	19	13.7
Police and detectives, protective service	97	13	13.6
Police and detectives, public service	566	73	12.9
Electrical and electronic technicians	361	46	12.7
Surveying and mapping technicians	73	9	12.6
Funeral directors	55	6	11.6
Motor vehicle operators	4,025	451	11.2
Engineers	1,906	167	8.5
Construction inspectors	69	5	7.4
Machinists	491	30	6.1
Grounds keepers and gardeners, except farming	875	53	6.0
Supervisors, related agricultural occupations	126	6	4.7
Material moving equipment operators	1,093	50	4.6
Water and sewage plant operators	64	3	4.3
Mechanics and repairers	4,521	185	4.1
Forestry and logging occupations	108	4	3.5
Pest control occupations	64	2	2.6
Extractive occupations	130	3	2.5
Construction trades	5,108	128	2.5
Fire fighting and fire preventing occupations	231	5	2.1
Transportation occupations, except motor vehicles	184	4	2.0
Airplane pilots and navigators	114	2	1.4

(Source: Women's Bureau, February 1997)

For more information consult the Women's Bureau's website at: http://www.dol.gov/dol/wb/public/stats/main.htm

Creative Space

Lily, Please stay
by Portia Taylor, 1998

"Dead men don't rape."

This, in navy spray paint
on white storage sheds
in the middle of my park,
bores,
amidst the flicks
of stately birds
and cantering dogs
with frisbees,
a tunnel
where
a few minutes ago, I
had a spine.

Traffic is the thread that
sews
bane urb
to the rect/
angle patch of park
where people flock for
comfort.

One of whom was
my
Sparkle.
Yesterday, he climbed
here
to socc'er
with his smile.

he opened the water lily in
my chest,
and for a while it would
rest
on the pool
we revivified
one night in June.

Today, his eyes were
vows,
transparent to the back-
drop,
placid mountain sky.

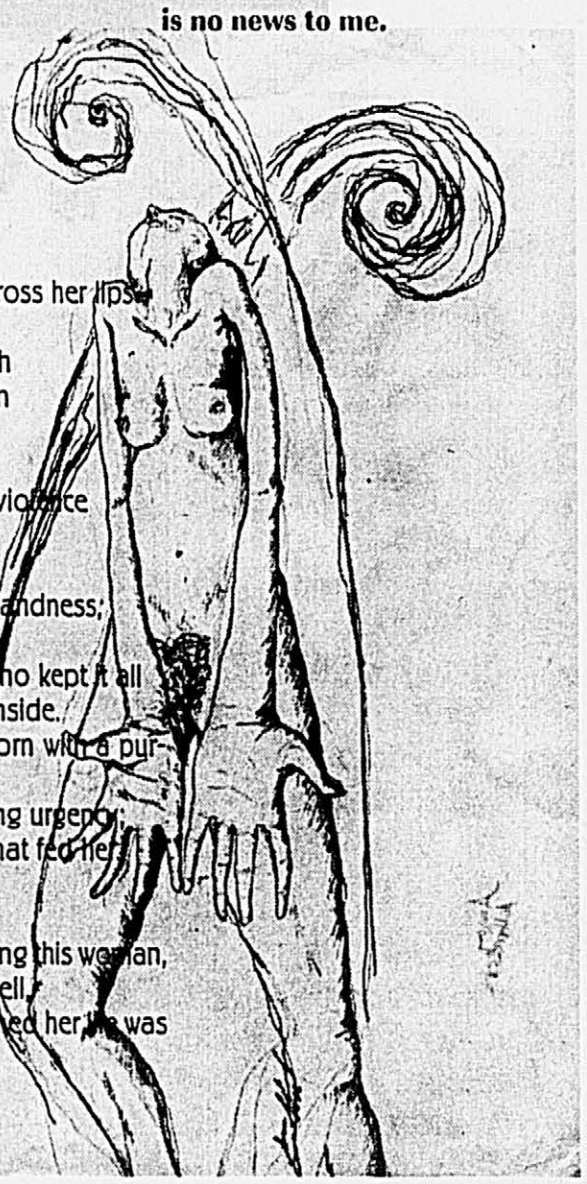
A dog has chased the
pigeons away.

I am still
on a bench.

Ah, the blues...

...For an anonymous head-
line,
her proposal without
question,

is no news to me.



by Anna Alfredson, 1995

Her voice tripped and fell across her lips
In garbled tones.
She kept wrapped in her flesh
A longing to be by holding in
Her voice.
In this way the world,
Aggressive, would guard its violence
In patient disgust for her.

Here in this blindness and blandness,
A woman could be born
And would be born of she who kept it all
Tucked, yet twitching fitfully inside.
And the woman would be born with a purpose
Set forth for her by the rushing urgency
The pumping of the blood that fed her.

And if all was good,
And if she succeeded in birthing this woman,
And if her body had done well,
And if the effort which consumed her life was enough...
This woman,
Would have a voice.

CREATIVE SPACE

I'm a Barbie Fan!

Creative Space

The Red Velvet Divan
by Heather L. Rideout

I am in a room, a circular room
that I chose to rent for the evening.
Upon entering,
I slip off my shoes
My toes play in the furry, cream carpet
The lighting is by the pale echo of candles.

To my right is a bar made of
cherry mahogany wood.
The crystal glasses sparkle;
I pour myself a glass of red wine.

Walking the perimeter of the circle
there is a large rocking chair with a
jade-colored cushion
and no arms.
Directly across of the entrance door
there is a long wall of bay windows
which extend from floor to ceiling.
The ocean grants me her presence when I look.

Continuing around to the left of the room
there is a white marble mantle with fireplace.
The flames in the hearth crackle,
chattering in deep conversation.

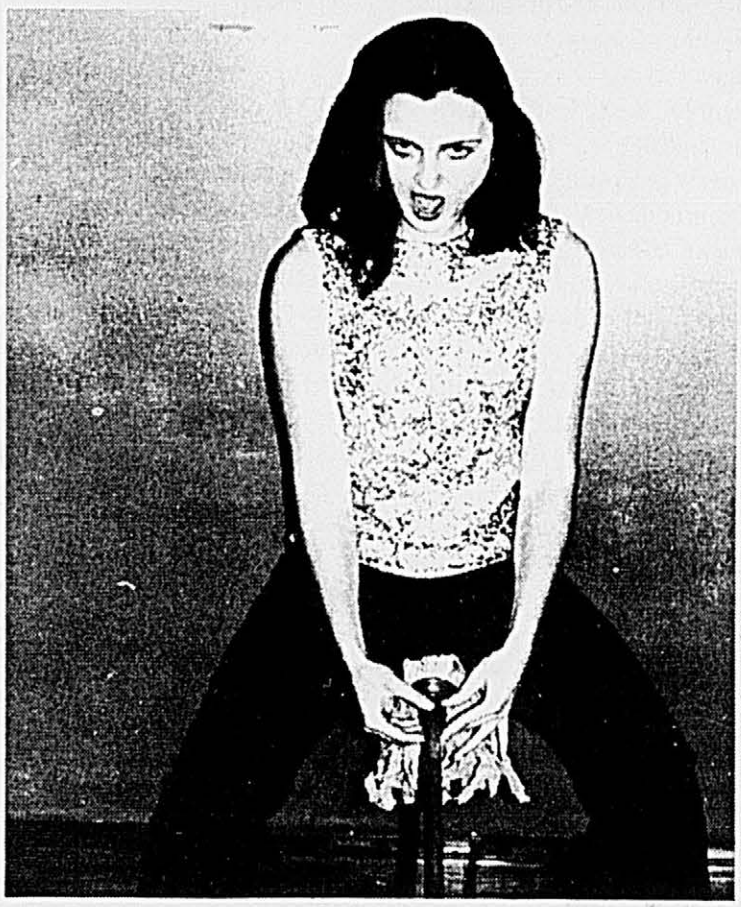
The warm fire invites me in and
I choose to lose myself.

Which brings us to the center of the room
where rests the
RED VELVET DIVAN.
It coos and purrs for my attention.
I crawl onto the soft, rich cushion
and sit like a queen on her throne.
I melt into the chair
and smile coyly when I notice
the ceiling holds my reflection.
I dive into the silver pool.
As I undress
I seduce the camera—
and myself.
I stretch my nude body across the
RED VELVET DIVAN
I straddle it
I stroke it
I sex it
until I finish and fall asleep.

The next morning
the sun's rays cascade into the room
and her sweet lips kiss my forehead in waking.
And I say good-bye to the
RED VELVET DIVAN
and she wonders if I'll
call her tomorrow.

Housewives on Acid

by Lori Braun



(and other activities...)

The Canadian Experience?

Education for immigrant women

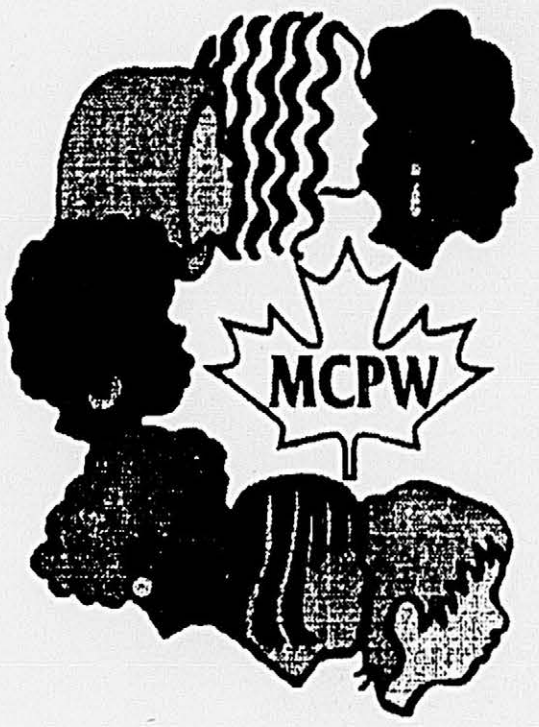
Partners in Progress

by Nina Gandhi

A few months ago, I moved into a risky part of Ottawa and began taking cabs on a regular basis. Soon I began to notice something: the drivers were all immigrant men and further that their stories were often very similar. Each was a highly educated individual trying desperately to upgrade his skills while supporting himself and in some cases his family on night-time shifts. I was struck by the lack of progress the last twenty-five years had brought to immigrants of Canada. And, perhaps even less for women.

My family immigrated to Canada in 1973. My father was able to finish his Master's in Engineering, and has gone on to a successful career, as I hope the gentlemen I spoke to will.

But where are the immigrant women today? My mother completed a BSc in India before immigrating. But she has spent her twenty-five years in Canada thus far doing various forms of data entry, often working two jobs, to establish our security here. She had been recommended by Immigration to pursue Pharmacy. However, being pregnant with my sister and accommodating my father's family, she took anything she could get as soon as she could get it.



According to a report by the Multicultural Council of Professional Women (MCPW), the state of other immigrant and visible minority women today is depressingly similar: "Based on Statistics Canada 1986 Census figures on occupations and income levels in Ontario, the average income (all occupations) of women from racial minority groups was roughly $1,000 less than the average income of women in the rest of the population... The wage differences of visible minorities are especially significant given that the number (of visible minorities) with higher qualifications is above average.

"Figures from the Statistics Canada 1986 Census show that a higher proportion of racial minority women in Ontario's labour force had a university degree (18.5%) compared with women in the rest of Ontario (13%). Additionally, figures from Statistics Canada's *Perspectives on Labour and Income* show that 22% of recent female immigrants had university degrees compared with 14% of Canadian born workers."

The report goes on to point out, based on Statistics Canada 1986 and 1991 Census figures, the source of the discrepancy: racial minority women and immigrants are underrepresented in managerial and professional occupations and over-represented in unskilled occupations compared with women in the general population. In other words, they are right where my mother is and has been for the last twenty-five years.

Supporting each other

What are Canadians and Canadian immigrants doing about this? There are, without a doubt, incredible community efforts to help immigrant and visible minority women stand on their own feet here.

In Ottawa, there are programmes such as the Immigrant Women's Centre at the Ottawa-Carleton Immigration Services Organization, which takes small groups of immigrant women through the steps of finding employment while developing their self esteem. I also discovered Immigrant and Visible Minority Women Against Abuse, working to eliminate abuse and empower immigrant and visible minority women. They also provide a culturally responsible crisis counseling service with counselors familiar with the client's mother tongue and culture.

There are also broad based cultural groups, such as the Lebanese and Arab Social Services, who cater to Arabic-speaking people and offer orientation, job placement, counseling, and translation services in hopes of equipping people for their new life. Similarly, there are general women's services such as the Rainbow Women's Centre, whose mission is simply to help people (including men) get off of the system. They offer courses on desktop publishing, computer processing, sewing and fashion designing, hardware technology, and the Web.

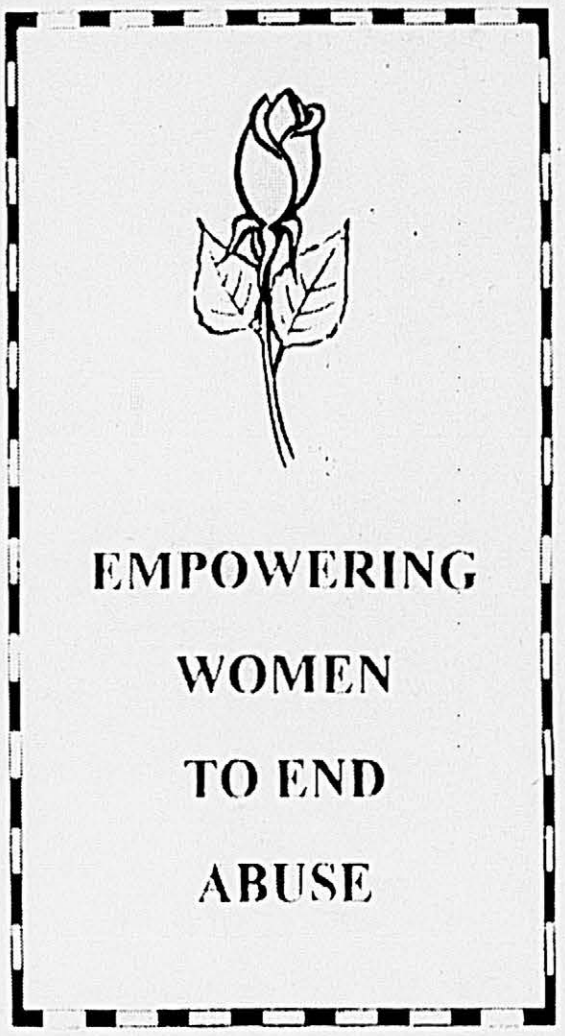
In Toronto, I spoke to a counselor at the Working Skills Centre which teaches skills such as mailing and warehousing, computerized accounting, computer-based skills, keyboarding, life skills, and ESL. She was teaching a 'settlement class' concerned with helping immigrant women comprehend and participate in Canadian society. Some of the topics include: the Ontario Human Rights Code and issues of discrimination, community resources, voting, domestic violence, the purpose of MPs and MPPs, and Canada's attitudes toward homosexuality.

To all of these programs, there has been a positive response. Not only do women discover that they have the skills needed to find a job in Canada, but also that they are not alone in their experiences or perspectives.

Is it enough?

Yet questions remain. What of those women for whom these services are not enough? What of those who have the skills for which these programs provide training and are seeking professional employment?

Jasna Bugarski, a woman who has participated on the MCPW, and who is unemployed after 10 years in Canada though previously a lawyer in Yugoslavia, pointed out that most training offered is for those on unemployment insurance (UI) and social benefits.



Indeed, Toni Makeba, also active in the MCPW, maintains that all high technology training funded by the government is for those on UI. This denies immigrant women who have not worked long enough in Canada to receive UI accessibility to this funding, and thus, in fact, accessibility to the high technology training that Canadian citizens receive. Bugarski concludes that "it's a very gloomy picture for immigrating women."

In addition to their comments about training, both Bugarski and Makeba point out that a requirement for "Canadian experience" by employers is a barrier to employment for immigrant women. One respondent to an MCPW questionnaire with a foreign degree in Civil Engineering says, "Experience outside of Canada is not valued. In more than a year of job search I got only one interview." Another with education in the computer field advises, "Canadian employers should be aware that there is intelligent life beyond Canada's borders."

There are suggestions of blatant racism in many immigrant's comments on the requirement for "Canadian experience"—their insistence on putting the phrase in quotes seems itself a direct accusation.

According to the same MCPW report, "Professional discrimination was noted by 49% of foreign-trained respondents as especially devastating, given that some of the women surveyed had received landed status in Canada based on the rating of their professional skills and training."

If Canadian experience is so necessary to Canadian employers, and if immigrant women will never be given a chance to get it, then perhaps Canada should reconsider its rather futile use of labour market qualifications in the "points system."

Bachelor degrees in science seem somewhat superfluous for data entry clerks, as do law degrees for the unemployed. The implications of underemployment and unemployment for these women are grave.

A counselor at a centre for multicultural women in Toronto talks about the experience of an immigrant woman getting her first job: "Something happens to women when they get money in their pockets. Some just give it to their husbands, but some keep it. The result is a restructuring of a power imbalance... and respect in their children's eyes... Access to money and an ability to get money gives someone more power in a family situation." Without this, in a country of "independent" women where friends and family are few and far between, the consequence can only be a loss of self-respect. A woman need not come all the way to Canada for that.

The Faculty of Arts is pleased to present the first of two interdisciplinary conferences:

Literature and the Construction of National Identity

March 19 and 20, 1998
Thomson House Ballroom, McGill University
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For more information, please contact Dianne Fagan
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daily classifieds

Ads may be placed through the Daily Business Office, Room B-07, University Centre, 9h00-14h00. Deadline is 14h00, two working days prior to publication. McGill Students & Staff (with valid ID): $4.65 per day, 3 or more consecutive days, $4.10 per day. General Public: $5.90 per day, or $4.95 per day for 3 or more consecutive days. Extra charges may apply, prices include applicable GST or PST. Full payment should accompany your advertising order and may be made in cash or by personal cheque (for amounts over $20 only). For more information, please visit our office or call 398-6790. WE CANNOT TAKE CLASSIFIED ADS OVER THE PHONE. PLEASE CHECK YOUR AD CAREFULLY WHEN IT APPEARS IN THE PAPER. The Daily assumes no financial responsibility for errors, or damages due to errors. Ad will re-appear free of charge upon request if information is incorrect due to our error. The Daily reserves the right not to print any classified ad.

H O U S I N G

Family from Vancouver looking for furnished 3 to 5 bedroom apartment from May through August, 1998. Preferably nearer parks than right downtown ie.; Mont Royal (park), Park Ave, parc Lafontaine. (604) 532-4104.

To share. Spacious 2-floor condo. Guy & St. Jacques. W/D, dishwasher. Close to metro. Available April 1st $425. Josh 989-9729.

H E L P W A N T E D

Earn $100-$200/day Master School of Bartending - bartending & table service. Complete placement agency. Leaders in the hospitality industry for 15 yrs. McGill rate 849-2828. WWW.BARTENDING.COM

Travel-Teach English: 5 day/40hr (Feb. 25-Mar.1) TESOL teacher certification course (or by correspondence). 1,000's of jobs available NOW. **FREE** information package, toll free 1-888-270-2941.

Athletes varsity: Basketball, Tennis, Gymnastics, Soccer, Wall Climbing, Football, Archery, Kayak, Waterski instructors for children's summer camp, Laurentians. Also arts & crafts, pottery, beadmaking, photo staff. Fax C.V. (514) 481-7863

Barmaid wanted

Bilingual, part-time for Bistro Tycoon. Call 849-8094.

WORDPROCESSING/TYPING

Success To All Students

WordPerfect 5.1 Term papers, resumes, applications, transcription of tapes. Editing of grammar. 29 years experience. $1.50/D.S.P. 7 Days/ week. On Campus/Peel/ Sherbrooke. Paulette 288-9638

Word Processing of term-papers, theses, reports, etc. Word-perfect 5.1 Laser printer. Fast professional service. Good rates. Close to McGill. Brigitte 282-0301.

WordPerfect 6.0 Windows, Theses $1.50/DSP, applications, term-papers, graphics, SAs, CVs. Specialized in medical and dental terminology. Professional, reliable. Close to McGill. Vicky 843-3572.

Best typing service available to students. $1.15/dbl spaced page. Word/laser printers only. Fast, professional service. Pro Papers Wendy 488-3174.

SERVICES OFFERED

English Angst? Proofreading/correcting for univ. papers, resumes, etc. Also tutor for Eng.-written/conversation. Good rates-pleasant atmosphere. Tel Lawrence 279-4710.

Georgio Tailor

Specialist in repairs of all kinds–men & women–professional work guaranteed. Student discount **20%-30%** off. Example regular pant hem **$4**. 1118 St Catherine West #406. 879-5649.

F O R S A L E

Wall-unit, 3-pces, Ikea, white. Best offer. Ivory carpet, 7'x9', $25.Aiwa dble cassette deck $25 744-7481 (day).

Dodge Neon '95 57k km, 4-door, standard, radio/cassette, 6 speakers $9500 744-7481 (day).

L E S S O N S / C O U R S E S

Art Courses

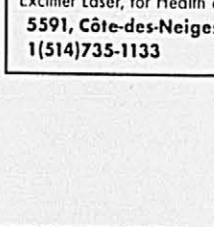
Pottery, sculpture, painting, drawing, live model, free studio time. 460 St. Catherine W. #502 Metro McGill 879-9694.

Come and Practice your French with Francophones. Bilingual Club Half and Half. Tel. 465-9128.

N O T I C E S

QPIRG Refund Period: March 9-27. Any student wishing to relinquish membership in QPIRG may come to 3647 University St. 1-5pm (Mon-Fri) and collect $3 refund.

Learn about research opportunities in NEUROSCIENCE. Come to an OPEN HOUSE at the Montreal Neurological Institute, McGill University (3801 University), Friday, March 13, 2:00-5:00 PM.



JCC Camp Kingswood

A coed overnight camp in Bridgton, Maine

Summer Positions

Supervisory: Unit Head, Arts & Crafts Director, Athletics Director, Camping Director, Drama Director, Office Manager, Waterfront Director;

Counselors with Specialties in: Aquatics, Archery, Athletics, Boating, Camping, Ceramics, Gymnastics, Photography/ Yearbook, Radio, Ropes, Sailing, Tennis;

Other: Secretary, 1st Cook

For information, call Wayne Goldstein or Ava Goldman, 617-244-5124.

Research Volunteers

Healthy men between 18-30 years wanted for study on light and circadian rhythms. Up to $1360 to stay 2-4 weeks at the Douglas Hospital Research Centre. Physiologic and psychometric monitoring. Risks and discomforts: blood samples and sleep deprivation.
Call 761-6131 ext 22398.
Dr. Boivin, Dept. of Psychiatry, McGill University.

Life Style without glasses
"No touch" Laser Excimer, PRK, Lasik

Myopia - Astigmatism - Hyperopia
Contact lens discomfort
LASER ULTRAVISION INSTITUTE
for careers in the Armed Forces, pilots, RCMP air traffic controllers, firemen, police, athletics.

Medical Director
Dr. Marvin L. Kwitko
Past Chairman, Advisory Committee on the Excimer Laser, for Health and Welfare Canada.
5591, Côte-des-Neiges, Mtl, Qc, Canada
1(514)735-1133 1-800-20LASER

CAMP COUNSELORS NEW YORK

Co-ed Trim Down-Fitness Camp. Hike and play in the Catskill Mountains, yet only 2 hrs from NY City. Have a great summer. Make a difference in kids lives! Good salary, internship credits & free Rm/Bd. All Sports, Water Skiing, Canoeing, Ropes, Lifeguards, Crafts, Dance, Aerobics, Nutrition & Counselors, Kitchen, Office, & Night Watchman. 120 positions.
Camp Shane (800)292-2267
Web: www.campshane.com

Advertising 398-6790

Director, Centre for University Teaching and Learning

The University seeks a Director of the Centre for University Teaching and Learning for a five-year term beginning June 1, 1998.

The mandate of the Centre is to:
1) to conduct research on the improvement of teaching and learning in higher education;
2) to carry out instructional development activities within the University that focus on course and program development;
3) to participate in the development of policy regarding university teaching and learning.

A recent cyclical review of the Centre recommended greater outreach of the Centre to the Faculties, as well as more emphasis on the use of information technology in the improvement of teaching and learning. The position is opened to academic members in the University community.

Interested individuals with a strong record of teaching and scholarship and a commitment to advancing the quality of teaching at McGill are asked to submit a curriculum vitae and names of referees to:

Dr. T.H. Chan, Vice-Principal (Academic),
Room 504, James Administration Building.

Deadline for receipt of applications is Friday, March 21, 1998.

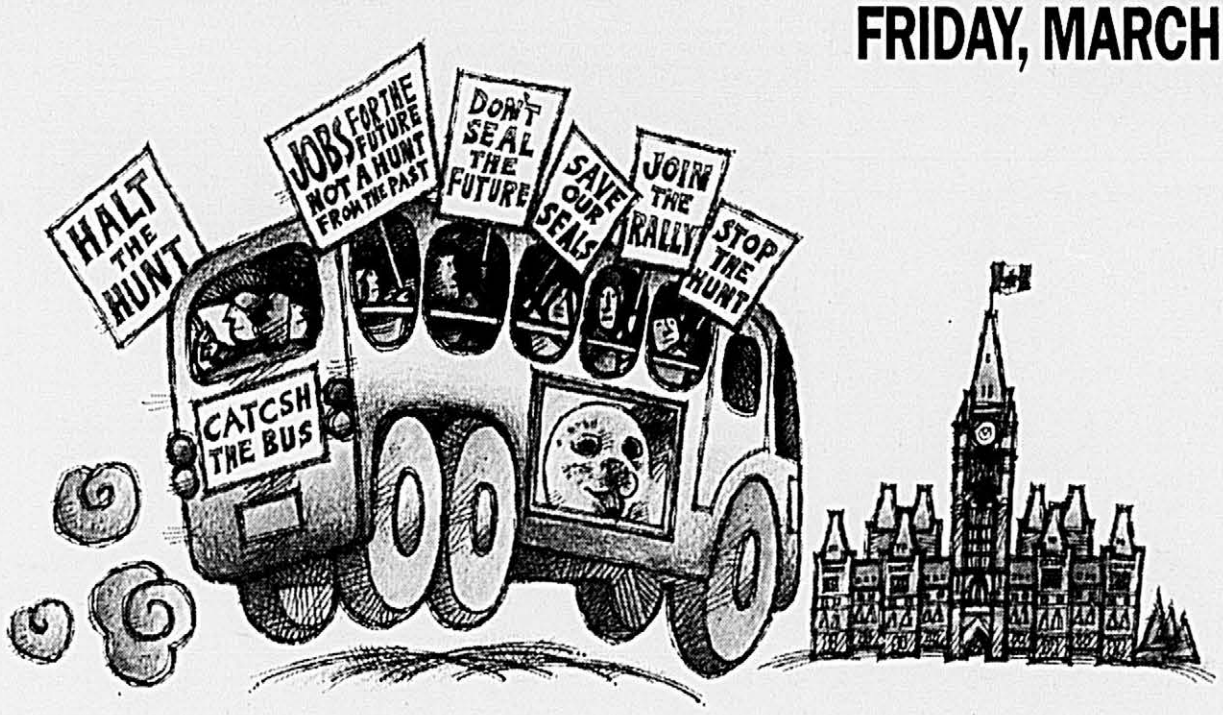
McGill University is committed to equity in employment.

Join the rally to stop the commercial seal hunt

CATCSH* THE BUS TO OTTAWA!

*CANADIANS AGAINST THE COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT

FRIDAY, MARCH 20, 1998



FIVE GOOD REASONS TO ATTEND THE RALLY AGAINST THE COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT:

(the largest hunt for marine mammals in the world)

1 Your tax dollars help pay for the seal hunt – which is uneconomical and creates very little employment. Newfoundlanders deserve *real* jobs.

2 It's cruel. Since 1996, over 100 sealers have been charged with illegal acts ranging from skinning a seal alive to illegal trading in the skins of protected pups.

3 Defenseless pups are being killed. About 220,000 in 1997 alone.

4 The number of seals that are killed is far too high – threatening the population's future. And the quotas are often exceeded.

5 Many seals are killed solely for their penises which are sold as sex potions. And as with rhinos, elephants and tigers, this trade in wildlife parts can threaten animals with extinction.

Help make this the largest save our seals rally in Canada's history!

FEDERAL LIBERAL POLICY CONVENTION

Ottawa Congress Centre
55 Colonel By Drive
Friday, March 20, 1:00 PM

CATCSH
CANADIANS AGAINST THE COMMERCIAL SEAL HUNT

A project of the International Fund for Animal Welfare – Canada

HOW TO GET ON THE BUS:

To help us in our planning, please call us as soon as you can. Transportation is free. (We will be passing the hat en route to offset costs.) *The most important thing for you to do is to reserve your seat and commit to showing up!*

In Ontario: call the local contact, whose number is listed on the back. If there is no local contact, please call the Toronto office at **416-532-7875** and we will save your seat.

In Quebec: call the Montreal office at **514-937-9797**.

SPREAD THE WORD!